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02

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SEASON 2006-07

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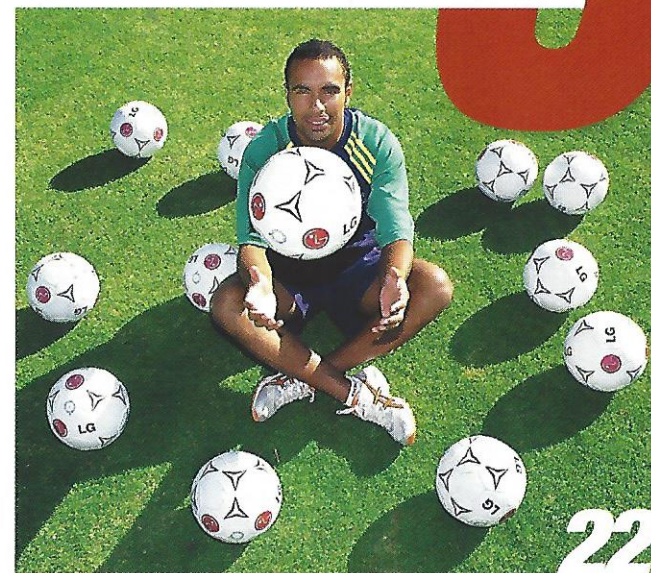


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THE Full 90



5 Round one action
How did your team go last weekend?

12 Snapped!
The Full 90's photo of the week

17 c urself?
Have The Full 90's roving photographers spotted you?

20 Fool for you
Try it yourself! Football's sneakiest sneaks

22 Shooter
Archie was a star last year, but now has even more experience under his belt!

31 Game Day
Everything you need to know about today's big match

39 Comeback King
Paul Okon, the ex-Socceroos skipper has plenty of unfinished business

45 Back on the Home Front
Lazza is giving back to his hometown fans and wants to help the Glory to glory

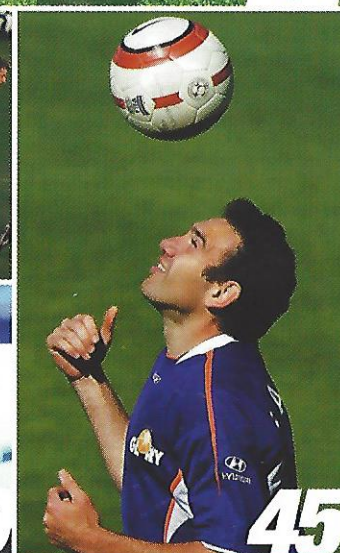
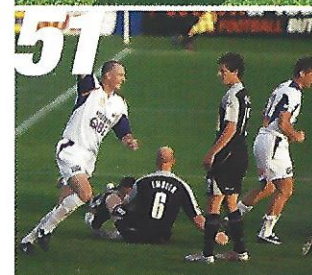
51 Number Crunch
Take a trip down memory lane and see where your team won and lost last year

54 Import: Grant Brebner
Victory have signed a player once considered Scotland's hottest prospect

58 Under New Management
The New Zealand Knights have a new leader to take them into the future

62 Hyundai A-League Fixtures
Everything you need to know about the 06/07 Hyundai A-League calendar

66 Q&A
Jamie McMaster talks about Leeds United, the Central Coast and supermarkets!



CONTENTS

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KICK-OFF FOR VERSION 2 SAW THREE WINS, A DRAW AND EVERY HOME TEAM SECURING THE FIRST CRUCIAL POINTS / **KEVIN AIRS**

And we're off! Version 2 of the Hyundai A-League kicked off with blood, goals and glory – and a rousing 3-0 win from Queensland Roar over the unlucky Perth side.

Melbourne's new lambada look proved they can turn things around after the dismal end to last season where their promising early start fizzled out. Their injection of Brazilian magic has paid dividends by making the team a constant danger.

Slip of the week though went to Grant Brebner's corner for Victory that went into orbit after his studs gave out. The undoubted miss of the week was Travis Dodds's shocking side netting in front of an open Victory goal. Never has a player been so glad to see he was offside...

Over in New Zealand, with new

manager Nick Theodorakopoulos in the Newcastle hotseat, the Jets are hoping to be more entertaining and score more goals. Unfortunately they failed on this bad-tempered outing. But Shane Webb earned the foul of the week with his brutal challenge on Michael White.

Meanwhile in Sydney, Central Coast's Damien Brown's bit of ball juggling on the sideline showed some spectacular skills and there was a selfless bit of defending when a sizzler from Sydney's Mark Milligan was painfully blocked in the box (fnarr fnarr...).

So at the end of round one, Roar are top of the table on goal difference, followed by Victory, then Sydney, and the rest making up the numbers below, propped up by Glory. What other dramas can we expect this weekend?!

IN THE BOX

GOALS

6

YELLOW CARDS

11

FASTEST GOAL

Kevin Muscat's penalty after 29 minutes

GOAL OF THE WEEK

Claudio's first for Victory

SYDNEY 1 MARINERS 0

New Sydney FC manager Terry Butcher should buy a lottery ticket this week because luck is definitely on his side after somehow managing to come away with three points.

'Keeper Clint Bolton kept Sydney in the match with a series of superb saves that denied Central Coast not just an equaliser, but a win.

Time after time the Mariners broke through Sydney's midfield and set up camp in their southern rivals' half, but too often their ambitious moves broke down before they could score.

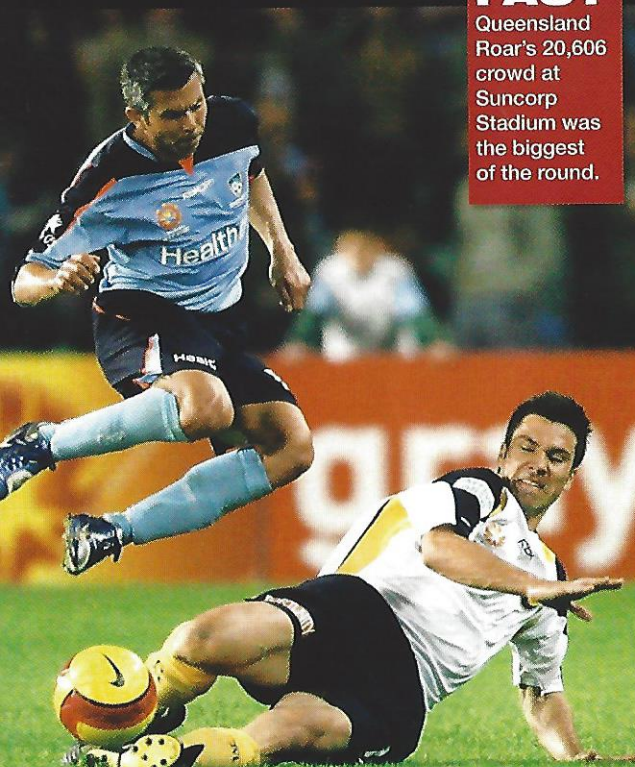
They still forced excellent reactions from Bolton, but it wasn't enough. Sydney's Iain Fyfe's goal separated the two teams, but the side will need to improve to hold onto the championship.

**FAST FACT**

Queensland Roar's 20,606 crowd at Suncorp Stadium was the biggest of the round.

**FAST FACT**

New Zealand Knights only managed to get one attempt on goal on target.

**VICTORY 2 UNITED 0**

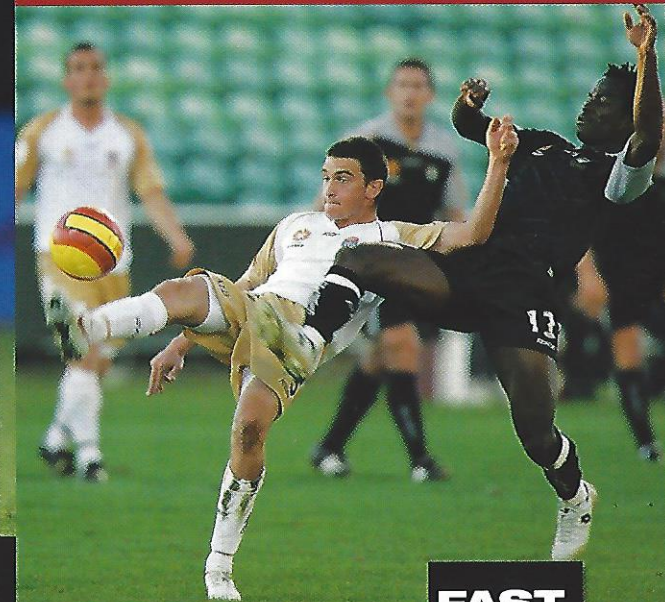
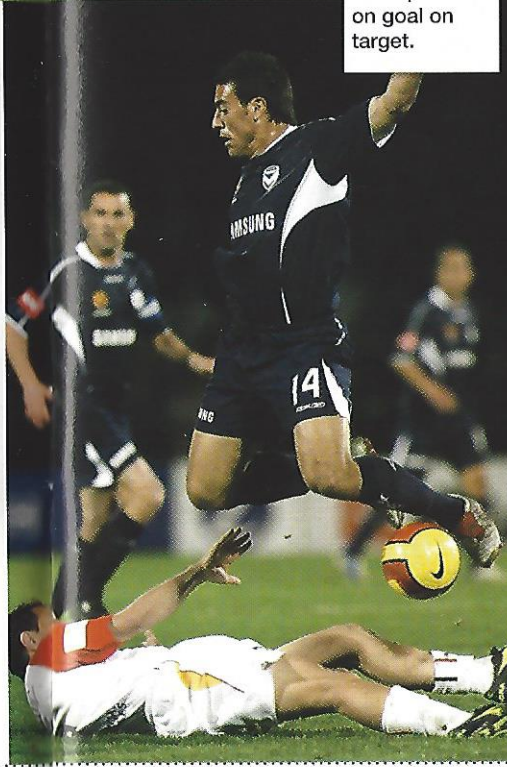
What do you get if you add Brazilians to the Hyundai A-League? A waxing that would make your eyes water...

Melbourne, the most disappointing team last season, took on top team Adelaide and romped home with the result thanks to their new imports.

Alessandro made a phenomenal debut, culminating in him winning a penalty which Kevin Muscat converted.

But as the teams walked off Kevin Muscat and Alessandro seemed to have a discussion regarding the existence of an omnipotent being or state of mind that had Alessandro's head spinning so much that he didn't return for the second half.

Fellow countryman Claudinho came on to score a superb second to secure Victory's first win of the new season.

**FAST FACT**

Round one was the first time no away teams scored.

KNIGHTS 0 JETS 0

Given their performances last season, even one point from a home game is significant for the New Zealand Knights, particularly as they embark on stringing a good season together. The effort is even more remarkable, considering the side is essentially a whole new team who have not had the chance to play much together.

But they really need to win these games if they are to have any hope of avoiding the wooden spoon for a second season.

Newcastle battled hard but appeared to miss striker Ante Milicic upfront and lacked the firepower to put the Knights to the sword.

The splash of claret when Paul Okon and Sean Devine clashed heads added some colour to a clumsy game. Not pretty, but both sides ended up with a point.



NEW ZEALAND
KNIGHTS
FOOTBALL CLUB



FAST FACT

Round one was the most successful for home teams with 10 points secured.

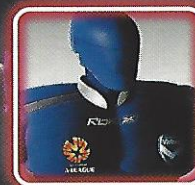
ROAR 3 GLORY 0

Alex who? Queensland bounced back from losing fan's favourite Alex Brosque to Sydney FC with a deadly display against troubled Perth – but they left it late enough.

With scores tied at 0-0 until almost 10 minutes from time, Roar finished with a flourish, putting away an impressive three goals in the dying moments of the game.

New striker Ante Milicic, lured from southern rivals Newcastle Jets, proved his worth by playing a key role throughout the game, despite not making it on to the scoresheet.

Debutante striker Simon Lynch opened Roar's account, and repaid Dario Vidosic's assist by setting up the midfielder for their second with a nifty one-two. Big defender Stu McLaren knocked home the third. Impressive.



VERSION2

CHOOSE YOUR TEAM

The round wrap

IS YOUR FAVOURITE TEAM SHAPING UP TO TAKE THE POINTS THIS ROUND?

8pm Friday, 1 September
Newcastle Jets vs Queensland Roar
EnergyAustralia Stadium, Newcastle

Following last week's difficult away trip to New Zealand, Newcastle coach Nick Theodorakopoulos' A-League inauguration won't get any easier. The Roar are the form side of the competition, with new striker Simon Lynch having already found his feet.

The new-look Jets are still to click, and haven't won since they beat Melbourne in round 19 last season.

But they are yet to play a match in Newcastle this campaign, including all of pre-season, so the players can expect some enthusiastic home support. Queensland's Spase Dilevski and Yuning Zhang are both unlikely to play.

Form: Newcastle: d l l l d. Queensland: W w d d d
Fact: Last time Queensland came to EnergyAustralia Stadium, they won 5-0, in round 20 last season.

12:30pm Saturday, 2 September
New Zealand Knights vs Adelaide United
North Harbour Stadium, Auckland

After their pre-season cup success, Adelaide United have been brought back down to earth. A difficult opening match in Melbourne was the pre-cursor to this trans-Tasman trip; one of the longest away journeys in the league.

While last year they could expect a win from this fixture, the Knights' improvement under new coach Paul Nevill is such that Adelaide will be delighted if they can snatch three points

this time around.

Despite their improvement, the Knights still haven't won in nearly a year. With five of their first six matches at home, if the Knights are to be finals contenders, they have to start winning. They'll also be hopeful for the return and last-minute inclusions of either Noah Hickey or Dani Rodrigues.

Form: New Zealand: D L L L D. Adelaide: l d w W d
Fact: New Zealand have never beaten Adelaide.

7pm Saturday, 2 September
Melbourne Victory vs Sydney FC
Telstra Dome, Melbourne

The match of the round sees the Hyundai A-League's debut at the Telstra Dome. A large crowd is expected, along with a sizeable traveling chunk of the Cove.

Last week Melbourne got the monkey of their back and finally scored against Adelaide not once but twice, with Kevin Muscat pocketing a penalty and Claudinho scoring a screamer. Along with Fred and Claudinho, the Brazilian trio were Merrick's match winners last weekend, but Muscat's influence cannot be underestimated.

The pressure is

already on Sydney coach Terry Butcher to improve, despite his team's first match victory. The Sydney FC back four were saved repeatedly by Clint Bolton last week, but against the potent Victory they may not be so lucky.

Form: Melbourne: W W D w L. Sydney: W W L W d
Fact: Last season's only match between these two teams in Melbourne ended 5-0 to the Victory.

3pm Sunday, 3 September
Perth Glory FC vs Central Coast Mariners FC
Members Equity Stadium, Perth

Both sides will consider themselves unlucky to lose last weekend. For Ron Smith's team, three late goals buried their hopes of a win in Queensland, while the Mariners could argue they deserved a point in Sydney. With

plenty of off-season changes, Perth will gain confidence from their first home match of the season, and will be looking to end a run of just one goal in five games. They'll also have to do it without the injured Bobby Despotovski.

Against the Mariners, who are one of the best organised sides in the competition, it will be difficult. The Mariners will also be boosted by the likely return of Stewart Petrie and John Hutchison, who scored an impressive 14 goals combined last season.

Form: Perth: l l w l D. Central Coast: l D W d w
Fact: Perth Glory have never beaten the Central Coast Mariners.

Form Guide

The past five home and away games have been recorded for each side. UPPERCASE is home and lowercase is away. For e.g. a team with a record of "l D W d w" means they most recently lost away, then drew at home, won at home, drew away and won away.

North Harbour Stadium, Auckland



SNAPPED! 25 AUGUST 2006
Melbourne Victory got their season off to a strong start last weekend with a 2-0 home win against the fancied Adelaide United outfit. Here, Archie Thompson was desperate to get on the score sheet with a dramatic and brave diving header in the box. Not to be outdone, United's Robert Cornthwaite cleared off the line to keep the home side at bay.
PHOTO: Mark Dadswell / Getty Images

Big Knight in

WITH IMPROVEMENT ON THE FIELD, THE KNIGHTS WANT TO FIRE THEIR FANS UP!

The management team behind the New Zealand Knights are looking for a huge second Hyundai A-League season. The Knights are urging the sports-mad Auckland public to turn out in droves as they take on the cream of Australia's football teams.

New manager Paul Nevin (who is also interviewed on page 58) said: "For those that have come out and had a look during the pre-season I would hope they have seen some quality in what we are doing. While we haven't picked up the results we would have liked, we have shown what we need to deliver on a consistent basis. "Even in our worst



performance of the pre-season and a man down against Queensland we weren't out of the game. We would love strong and vocal home support to lift the players to a win and set us off on the right foot."

Nevin brings with him a new style, and one that he will use to entertain. The trans-Tasman

rivalry between New Zealand and Australia is not lost either, as Nevin believes each fixture is like playing an international match.

Chairman of the FFA Mr Frank Lowy has also pledged his support. At the launch of the Hyundai A-League he said: "The Knights are important to us and continue to take their rightful place in the league. It's wonderful to

have them in our competition. Who knows, when the league is expanded there could be two teams [from New Zealand]."

This round's match against Adelaide United will be a tough one for both sides, and a result for the Knights will be crucial for a strong campaign start. Shout!



FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH

"I'm a football fan from way back and to be able to combine my love of football with recording a song I'm proud of was great... 'Sydney FC For Me' was written to represent the team, its fans and the steps forward football is taking." Jimmy Barnes after recording Sydney FC's new club song.

"I think the standard's a lot better, I think every team will go in with four times the pace. It's a lot quicker, everyone's

a lot fitter and you're always going to be on your toes, so it's definitely a better standard than the last few years of the NSL." Newcastle Jets' Nick Carle on the difference between the A-League and the National Soccer League.

"The spotlight is on football in Melbourne in Australia. The only genuine world game, football, has ignited the passion of people right across the country and here in our city, Melbourne. In Melbourne, we love sport

and we love football. The City is very delighted to be able to support the development of the world game." Melbourne Lord Mayor John So at the Victory's season launch.

"Any available players that have the potential to score goals will be in the squad this season... Basically the ones that won't be in the squad will be defenders." Queensland Coach Miron Bleiberg jokes about his renowned attacking mentality.

THE FULL 90 TIPSTERS ROUND TWO GAMES

Follow our tips at your own peril! We're serious!	Newcastle Jets vs Queensland Roar	New Zealand Knights vs Adelaide United	Melbourne Victory vs Sydney FC	Perth Glory vs Central Coast Mariners	
 Phil Massaad Nerds FC	Newcastle	Draw	Sydney FC	Central Coast Mariners	3
 Richie Young The Full 90	Queensland	Adelaide	Melbourne	Draw	2
 Mark van Aken Green and Gold Army	Newcastle	Adelaide	Draw	Central Coast Mariners	4
 Emma Kean The Full 90	Draw	Adelaide	Melbourne	Draw	2
 Andy Jackson FourFourTwo	Queensland	Adelaide	Draw	Central Coast Mariners	3

NO WAY!

THE PERSON NEXT TO YOU DIDN'T GET THE FULL 90? THEN THEY WON'T KNOW THIS!

Socceroo and Melbourne Victory defender Kevin Muscat wasn't actually born in Australia. He was in fact, born in a place called Crawley in England.

In Dwight Yorke's home town back in Tobago, there is a stadium named in his honour. You can find the Dwight Yorke Stadium in Bacolet, Tobago and it was constructed for the 2001 U-17 World Cup. The Sydney FC star is understandably chuffed about it.

Jonti Richter, New Zealand Knight's zippy forward is well-travelled. While he is now with the Knights, Jonti has played

most of his professional career in Australia (Northern Spirit, Queensland Lions and Queensland Roar). Add to that, the 23 year-old was born in Johannesburg South Africa!

Queensland's new season signing, Liam Reddy is from a famous sporting family. Many have heard of his father Rod's rugby league exploits but his siblings aren't too shabby themselves. His brother Joel is in the Parramatta Eels squad and his sister Bianca plays netball for the Adelaide Thunderbirds.

Sydney FC's Terry McFlynn was born in Northern Ireland.

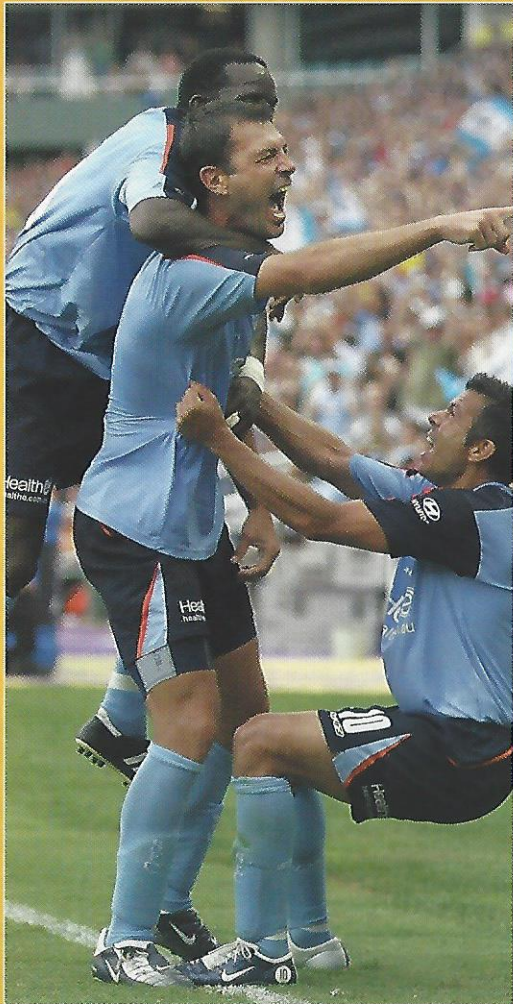
Balls up

Notice anything a little different from last season?

Season two of the Hyundai A-League sees a new ball enter the fray... well almost! The official ball has a new colour scheme, so gone are the days of the red and white ball. As official ball suppliers to the Hyundai A-League, Nike's new total90Aerowll ball is three-tone: it is predominantly yellow, and is matched with a striking red and orange. Sweet!



Every game of the Hyundai A-League is live and exclusive on FOX SPORTS



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Sep 1	A-League: Newcastle v Queensland - LIVE	8.00 pm
Sep 2	A-League: New Zealand v Adelaide - LIVE	10.30 am
Sep 2	A-League: Melbourne v Sydney - LIVE	7.00 pm
Sep 3	A-League: Perth v Central Coast - LIVE	5.00 pm
Sep 4	A-League Highlights Show	6.30 pm
Sep 7	Total Football	9.30 pm
Sep 8	A-League: Adelaide v Newcastle - LIVE	8.00 pm
Sep 9	A-League: Central Coast v Queensland - LIVE	7.00 pm
Sep 10	A-League: New Zealand v Melbourne - LIVE	10.30 am
Sep 10	A-League: Perth v Sydney - LIVE	5.00 pm
Sep 11	A-League Highlights Show	6.30 pm
Sep 14	Total Football	8.30 pm
Sep 15	A-League: Queensland v New Zealand - LIVE	8.00 pm
Sep 16	A-League: Adelaide v Perth - LIVE	7.00 pm
Sep 17	A-League: Sydney v Newcastle - LIVE	3.00 pm
Sep 17	A-League: Melbourne v Central Coast - LIVE	5.00 pm
Sep 18	A-League Highlights Show	6.30 pm
Sep 21	A-League: New Zealand v Sydney - LIVE	6.00 pm
Sep 21	Total Football	8.00 pm
Sep 22	A-League: Queensland v Adelaide - LIVE	8.00 pm
Sep 23	A-League: Central Coast v Newcastle - LIVE	7.00 pm
Sep 24	A-League: Perth v Melbourne - LIVE	5.00 pm
Sep 25	A-League Highlights Show	6.30 pm
Sep 28	A-League: New Zealand v Central Coast - LIVE	6.00 pm
Sep 28	Total Football	8.00 pm
Sep 29	A-League: Newcastle v Perth - LIVE	8.00 pm

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This season The Full 90 wants to reward the Hyundai A-League's biggest fans. Each week our snappers will keep their eyes out for the most passionate fans and we'll run the best shots. If you spot yourself, email your picture to fans@haymarketmedia.com.au. The first five people to email us will win a limited edition World Cup T shirt! Were you at New Zealand vs Newcastle last weekend?

c urself?

shout!



The Blue & White Brigade FIRE UP

THE VICTORY'S FORTUNES FLUCTUATED LAST SEASON, BUT THEIR CORE FANS ARE TRUE BLUE / **JACKSON GOTHE-SNAPE**

Victory fans will be the first to admit that last season was a disappointment. Missing out on the finals series was a huge blow to Melbourne's pride, made worse by the eventual success of rivals Sydney FC.

Spokesperson for Victory supporters group the Blue and White Brigade, Adam Tennenini, declares "we're too proud of our city in Melbourne to be languishing where we did last year."

Despite the problems on-field and failing to win games that mattered most, Melbourne Victory's support off the field never wavered. The club finished with an average crowd of over 14,000 but the Blue and White Brigade are rallying other Melbournites to blow those averages out of the water.

Just as the Victory are tweaking things on the field, so too are their supporters. Major supporters' group

the Union disbanded earlier this year, but the Blue and White Brigade have stepped into the breach.

"The Blue and White Brigade is your hardcore support inside the stadium," Adam, aka Tunna, says. "We all meet at the Richmond Club Hotel then march to Olympic Park. Once we're in the stadium all hell breaks loose."

The group is focused on vocal support for the Victory, at home and away. "Most enjoyable was the away trip to Queensland last year. We won the game 1-0 with an Archie goal and the partying both before and after was unreal," says Adam.

Wherever the results this season, the Blue and White Brigade say they'll stay true. "We don't want to be one of these groups that fold after one or two years. We want to be there in 10 years time," Tunna triumphantly declares. ■

THE BLUE AND WHITE BRIGADE ON

■ Terrace favourites

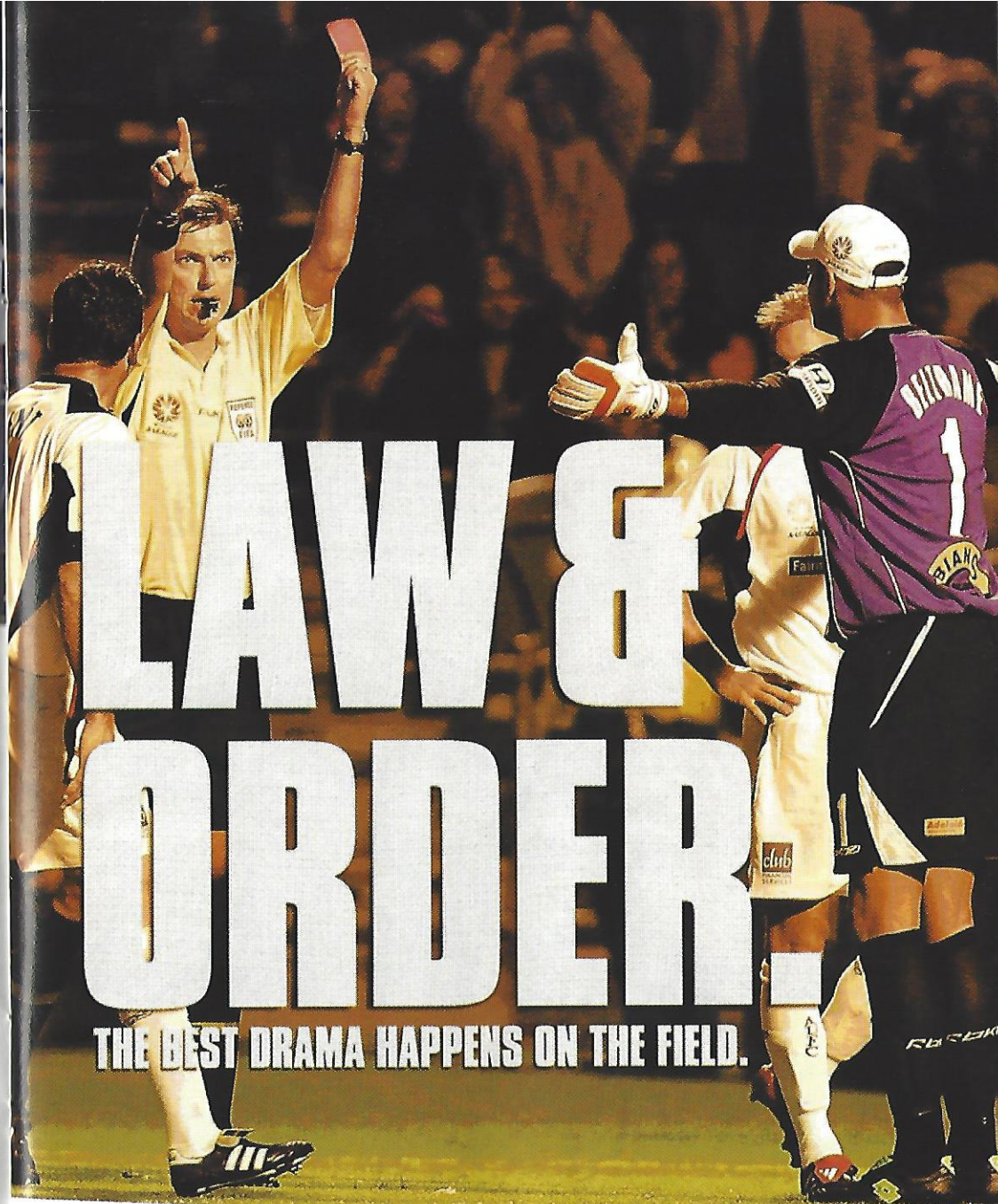
You can't go past Archie. He's our main man.

■ Sydney FC

They hate us and we hate them. Beating them three times this year will be nice.

■ The future

We want to go from strength to strength.



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TIPS AND TRICKS LOW CROSS

Kicking is easy right? Everyone has been kicking since they were little, kicking in the air, at stones on the street, or balls of different shapes and sizes.

Many of today's top players didn't always have a football available to them when they were young so they came up with clever ways to practise, from taped-up oranges to tennis balls.

To be a great kicker, your technique has to be perfected to ensure that you are maximising your chances of making a successful pass, cross or shot on goal.

Become a footballer that can pass, cross and shoot with purpose and accuracy.

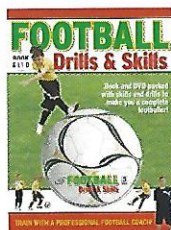
There is a lot more to a good kick than just your foot making contact with the ball. Your body posture and positioning is the key and using different parts of your foot impacts on the eventual delivery of the ball. Connecting with different sides of the ball will also impart speed and swerve.

You probably like to use one foot more than the other, but to be a great player it's important to practise with both feet.

LOW CROSS

Sometimes you will find yourself in a position to cross the ball without a defender in front of you, or between you and your teammate. Maybe you have been able to dribble past the defence, or a teammate has given you a great pass that puts you out on your own. Here, a low cross is in order and this type of delivery is easiest for your teammate to control and then shoot at goal.

- Look up and check where it would be best to cross the ball for your striker.
- Position your body in a more upright style than you would to deliver a high cross, with your head over the ball.
- Strike the middle section of the ball with a crisp, clean kick and have good follow-through.
- Use your high instep, for power and accuracy.



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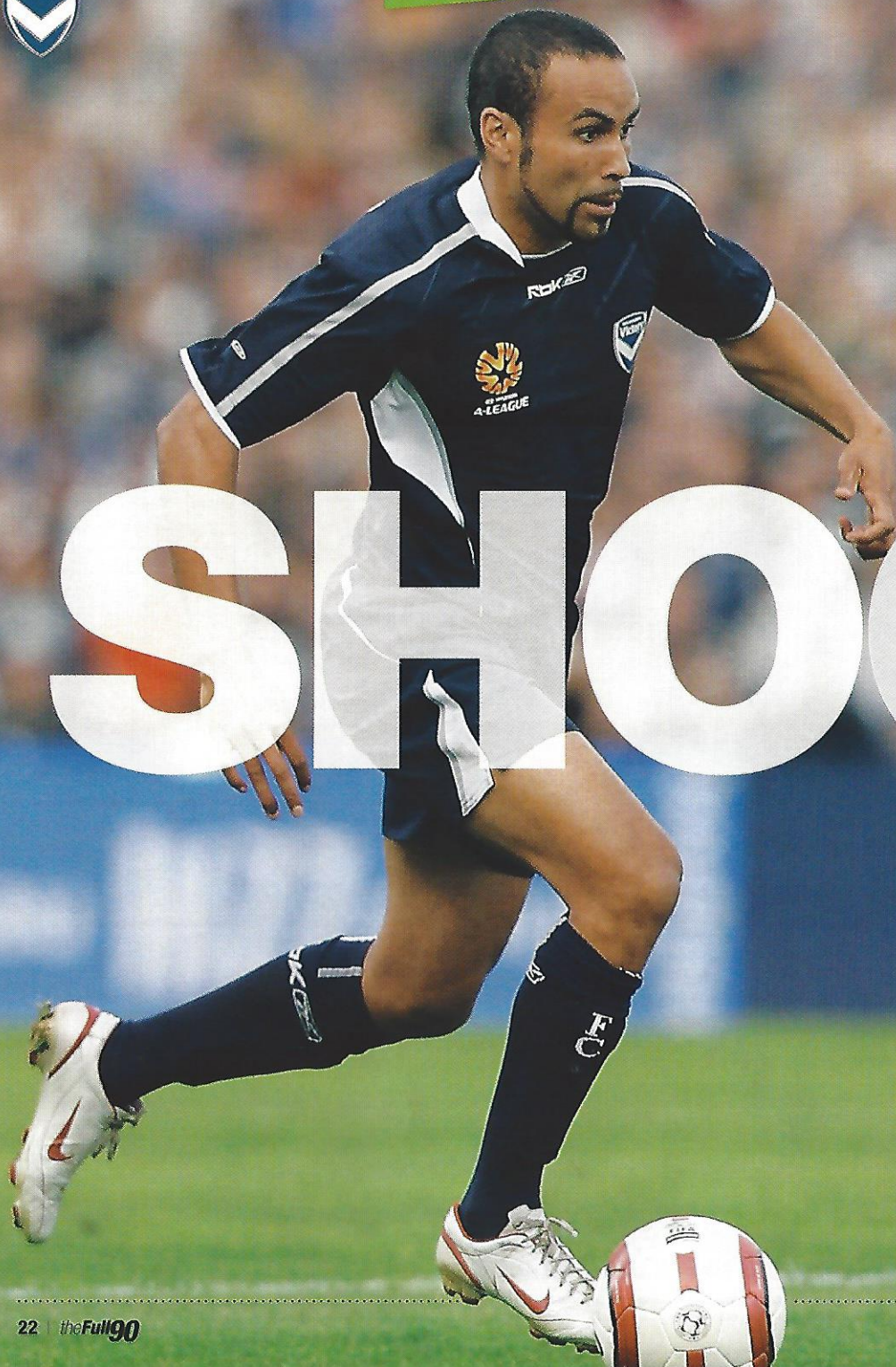


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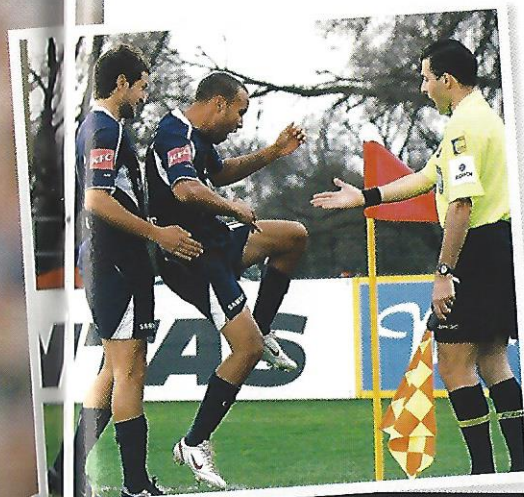
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SHOOTER



ARCHIE THOMPSON'S RETURN TO THE HYUNDAI A-LEAGUE IS A COUP FOR MELBOURNE. BUT WHEN ALL'S SAID AND DONE, HIS EXCITING STYLE IS A SCORE EVEN FOR RIVAL FANS! / **AIDAN ORMOND & RICHIE YOUNG**

Archie Thompson will be 28 this October. "Yeah, I'm getting on," laughs the Melbourne Victory star. "But my mindset is still young. I'm keeping the mohawk 'til I'm in my wheelchair!"

That's typical larrikin humour from one of the game's favourites and a player known for his pace and flashy scoring. And when he does finally end up in a retirement home for former A-Leaguers, the nippy, New Zealand-born striker will have a rich football career to look back on, especially if the last 10 years is any indication.

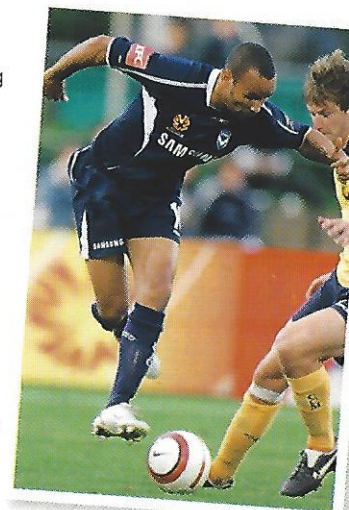
From kicking a ball around for fun

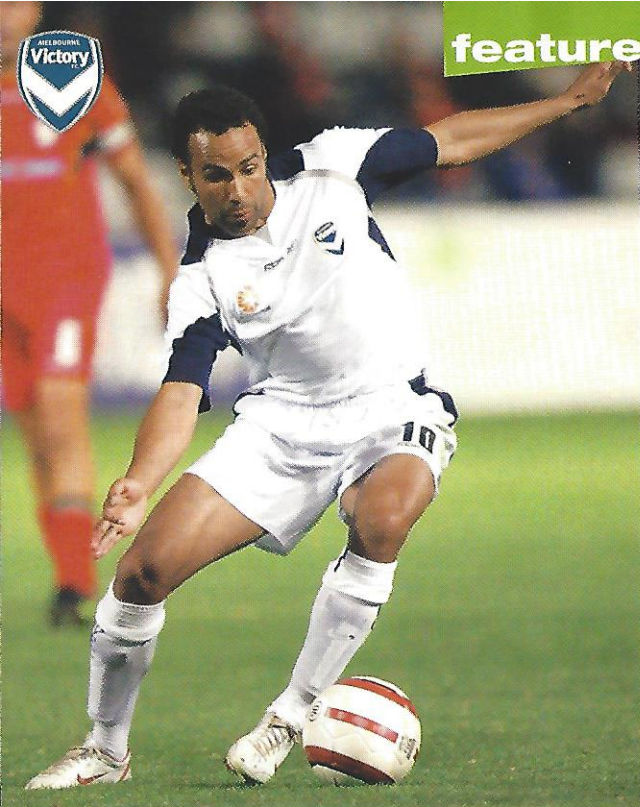
in Bathurst, NSW while working as a kitchen hand to playing in Europe and being selected in the Socceroos squad for the World Cup, it's been a remarkable adventure.

FAMILY MAN

Listening to Archie talk these days, though, you get the feeling his move back to Melbourne Victory from Holland and PSV Eindhoven a few months ago may well be the last big overseas adventure in his football career.

"I've got a wife and kids





these days," he says. "Look, I always have the fire to go to Europe and play, but it would have to be something pretty special for me to uproot my family again."

His growing maturity on and off the park is reflected in the way he views the spat with Victory over his move earlier this year to PSV. "I could've handled it differently," he says of a public slanging match between him and Melbourne after negotiations for the loan move

**At PSV with
Socceroo
teammate
Jason Culina**



Lucky 13

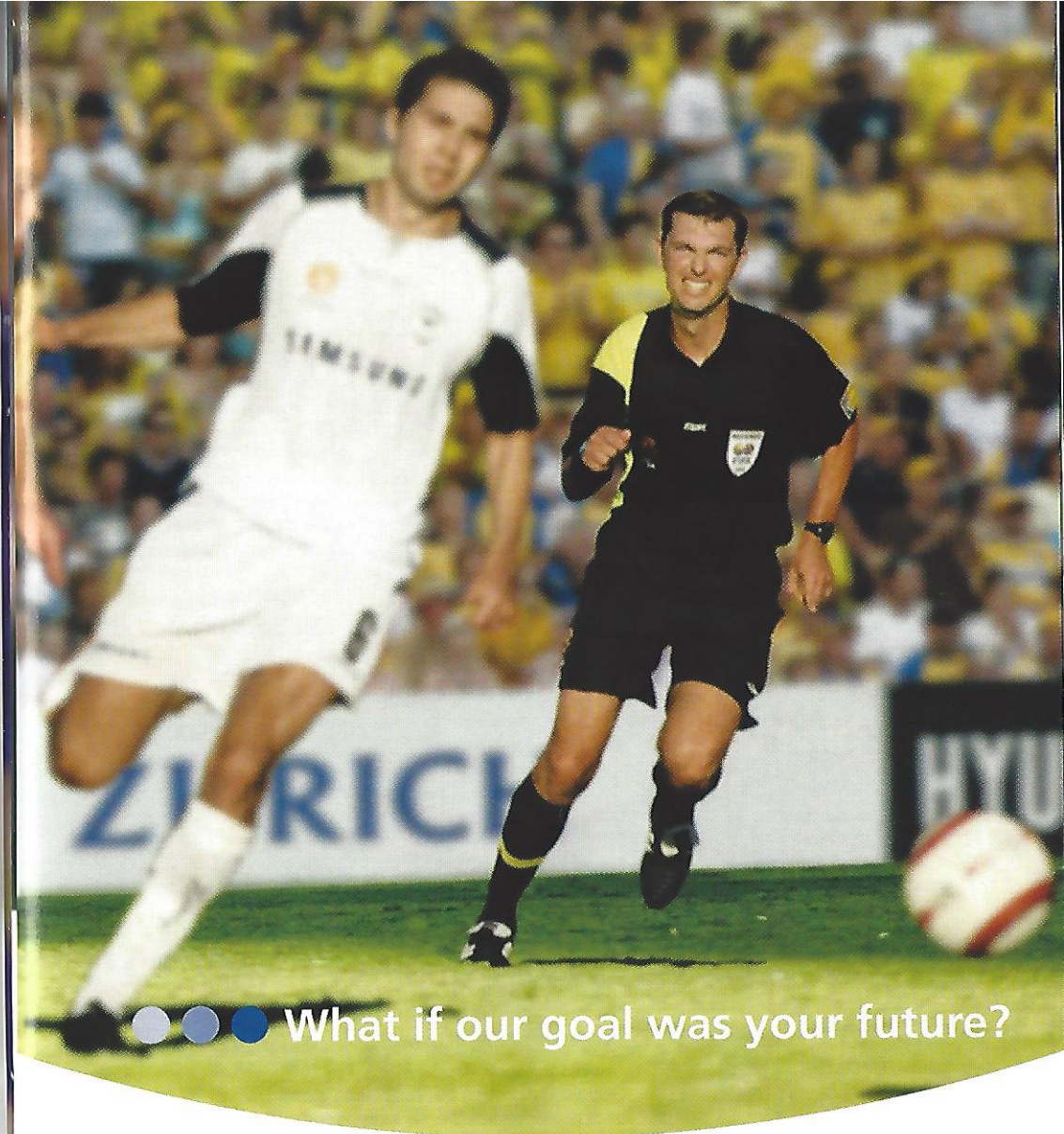
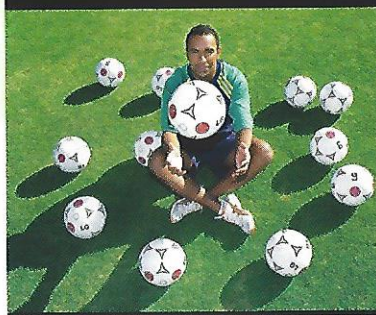
You score a goal in a match and feel great. Get a brace, brilliant. A hat-trick has you dreaming through the night. But how do you feel when you score 13? Back in 2001, Australia thumped American Samoa 31-0 in Coffs Harbour, and Archie netted an impressive 13 goals. Yes, *thirteen!*

This massive haul landed Archie in the *Guinness Book of Records* for the most goals scored in an international match. Naturally, it raised Archie's profile and he soon found himself playing in Europe. But the goals proved as much a hindrance as they were helpful.

In 2004 he revealed to *The Age's* chief football writer Michael Lynch: "When I got to Belgium there was a bit of a frenzy with the fans and the media."

"They were all expecting me to score half-a-dozen goals every game. They didn't know or maybe didn't believe that there could be such weak opposition."

"I have got a page in the *Guinness Book of Records* and an entry in the World Cup history books. But it was a bit of a joke and has probably caused me as much embarrassment in a way."



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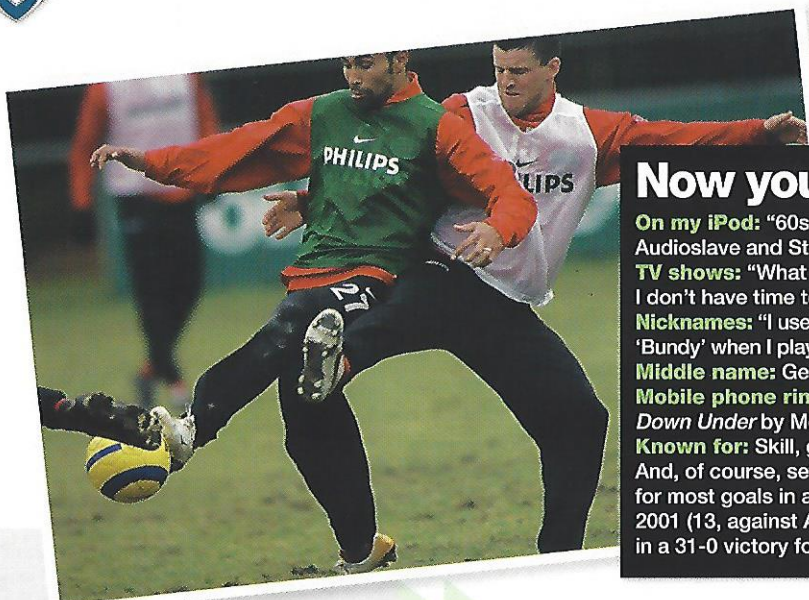
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Now you know

On my iPod: "60s music plus Audioslave and Stereophonics"
TV shows: "What with the kids, I don't have time to watch TV"
Nicknames: "I used to be called 'Bundy' when I played at Gippsland."
Middle name: Gerald
Mobile phone ringtone: Down Under by Men At Work
Known for: Skill, goals and pace. And, of course, setting the record for most goals in an international in 2001 (13, against American Samoa in a 31-0 victory for the Socceroos).



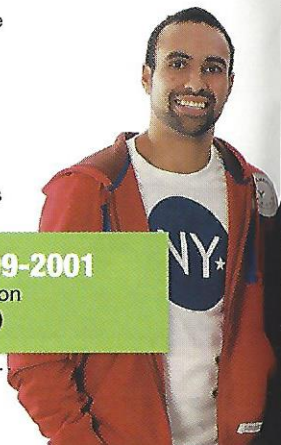
appeared deadlocked. At the time, the public simply saw the normally mild-mannered Thompson boil over with frustration.

"It was purely about the World Cup," is his explanation of his emotional outburst. "Like anyone, I was desperate to play in the World Cup. And to play for a club that Guus himself was coaching was vital for my chances."

"I COULD'VE HANDLED [LEAVING VICTORY LAST SEASON] DIFFERENTLY. IT WAS PURELY ABOUT THE WORLD CUP. LIKE ANYONE, I WAS DESPERATE TO PLAY."

It did the trick. Archie made it to Germany, although he was on the plane back to Australia after his loan period expired in the Netherlands (with just two games under his belt for the side), albeit, with some amazing memories of the Dutch champions.

"I would've loved to have stayed on. To have played and trained with players



Archie's Clubs

1995
Bathurst '75

1996-1999
Gippsland Falcons (NSL)

1999-2001
Carlton (NSL)



They said it...

Archie has been fantastic, he's playing some of the best football of his career and you couldn't ask for a better ambassador for the league.

FFA Head of Operations Matt Carroll at the start of the Hyundai A-League's first season

Archie's been tearing into training since coming back and has been really keen to impress.

Ernie Merrick in the Hyundai A-League pre-season

I am also looking to Archie Thompson to become a leader because everybody else has so little game time at this level.

Graham Arnold on Archie's inclusion for the Socceroos vs Kuwait Asian Cup qualifier

like Michael Reiziger and Philip Cocu was awesome. And Guus's training sessions were just so intense. I was knackered when I finished."

"GUUS WAS SCARY"

So, given he played and trained under Guus at club and national team level,



2001
Marconi (NSL)

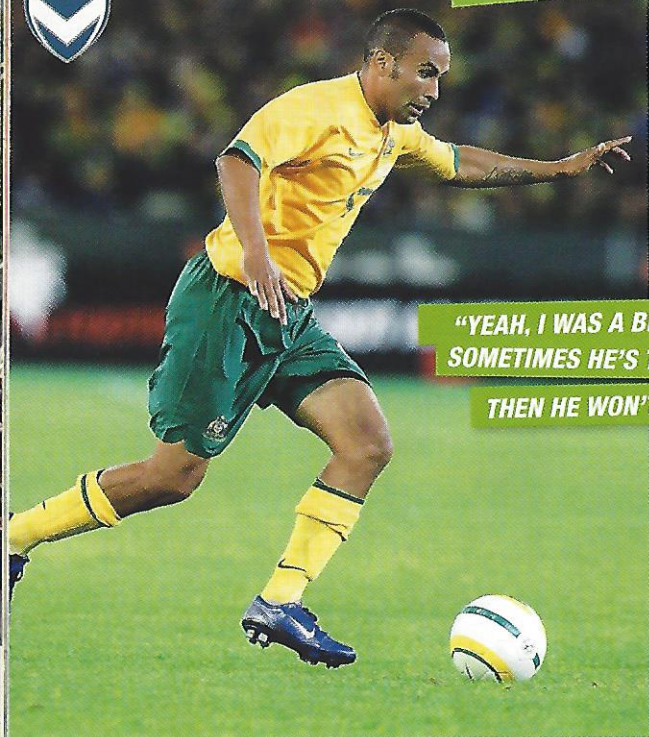
2001-2005
Lierse SK (Belgium)

2005-2006
Melbourne Victory (Hyundai A-League)

2006
PSV Eindhoven (Holland)



feature



what are his impressions of the great man? Archie's reply mirrors what interim Socceroo coach Graham Arnold says: the Dutchman is not to be messed with.

"YEAH, I WAS A BIT SCARED TO APPROACH GUUS. SOMETIMES HE'S TALKING WITH YOU ALL FINE AND THEN HE WON'T TALK TO YOU FOR A FEW WEEKS."

"Yeah, I was a bit scared to approach Guus," laughs Archie. "He's a funny character and a bit hard to understand. Sometimes he's talking with you all fine and then he won't talk to you for a few weeks. It keeps you on your toes. You just never know with Guus."

ONWARDS TO VICTORY

And you just never know with Archie. After being named vice-captain of the Socceroos for the Asian Cup match against Kuwait in August ("I was shocked

and overwhelmed"), he once again could be the man to lead the scorers' charts in the Hyundai A-League. But he's keen to deflect the limelight to the team as a whole.

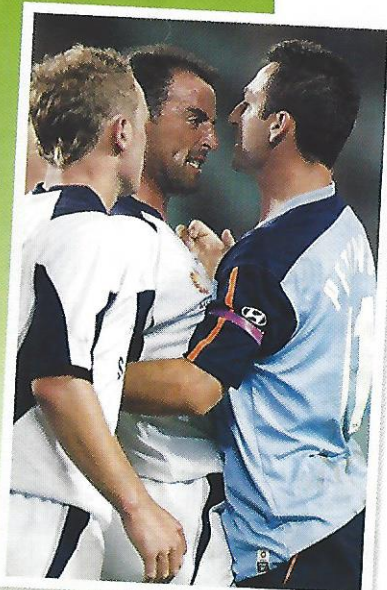
"This year, Victory is stronger," he says. "Guys like [Grant] Brebner add strength to our midfield and Daniel [Allsopp] has been looking great. We're generally a more balanced side. And we have our trio of Brazilians who've waited a long while to show what they can do."

And Archie's love affair with the Victory fans is mutual. "They've always supported me and the team so well," he says. "The love's back; gotta have the love."

The feeling's mutual, Archie. Welcome back. ■

On the boos

Kevin Muscat was as welcome at Sydney's Aussie Stadium last season as Marco Materazzi at a Zidane family reunion. Boored with every touch, his full-blooded approach hit a nerve with Sydney's supporters (and the ref apparently, as he received a yellow card for his part in a bust-up). But with the first clash between Melbourne and Sydney taking place at Telstra Dome this season, it's Victory fans' chance to boo back. But which player will cop it? Carney for his hair, Corica for his grand final exploits or Dwight for, erm... just being Dwight. Guess we'll find out soon!



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victory

WELCOME TO THE TELSTRA DOME

ERNIE MERRICK IS LOOKING FORWARD TO PLAYING AT THEIR SECOND HOME

Welcome to Telstra Dome for our long-awaited round two clash with Sydney FC.

It truly is a sign of how far the sport has come in this country that we're able to be here tonight at this magnificent venue for a domestic season league match.

Last season was certainly a watershed for Australian football. In round one, we faced Sydney FC in front of over 25,000 fans at Aussie Stadium. No one really gave us a chance, but a brilliant performance by the team collectively and by Archie individually saw us dominate the match. I felt we were unlucky not to secure all three points on opening day last season.

The next meeting between us resulted in a fantastic win for Melbourne. Everything went our way as we recorded a 5-0 win over Sydney. Richard Kitzbichler opened the scoring, and Archie and Kevin both

scored two each.

Our final meeting was a different story, with Sydney playing very well, forcing Michael Theoklitos into a number of important saves to keep the scoreline at 2-1.

So last year we matched up pretty well against the eventual champions, and I'm expecting another close and competitive result here tonight.

We're looking forward to a real occasion tonight, and for you to play your part in cheering the players and helping them over the line.

Thank you all for your continued support of the team and we look forward to a big night and a big Hyundai A-League season.

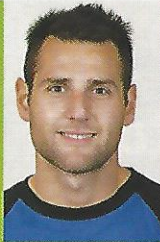
Ernie Merrick



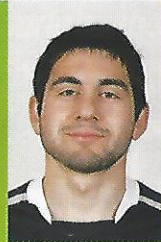
ERNIE MERRICK
MANAGER

"... LAST YEAR WE MATCHED UP PRETTY WELL AGAINST THE EVENTUAL CHAMPIONS AND I'M EXPECTING ANOTHER CLOSE RESULT HERE TONIGHT."

1



Michael Theoklitos
Pos GK App 1 CS 1
DOB 11 February 1981
 A tall shot-stopper, Theoklitos competes for the 'keeper's spot with Eugene Galekovic.



Steve Pantelidis
Pos DF App 1 Goals 0
DOB 17 August 1983
 One of the characters of the team, 'Panta' provides the steel in the midfield, allowing the forwards to do their thing.

2



Kevin Muscat
Pos DF App 1 Goals 1
DOB 7 August 1973
 A veteran of the game, but as hungry as ever. Muscat is like a brick wall for whichever attackers he faces.



Michael Ferrante
Pos MF App – Goals –
DOB 28 April 1981
 Former captain of the West Ham Youth team, Michael's skill and pedigree make him one of Victory's star players.

3



Daniel Piorkowski
Pos DF App 1 Goals 0
DOB 12 January 1984
 Highly rated right back who will be looking for an injury-free season to re-establish his Socceroos credentials.



Fred
Pos FW App 1 Goals 0
DOB 18 August 1979
 One of the highly touted 'Trio from Rio', Fred played 10 seasons in Brazil. Expect some samba flair.

4



Mark Byrnes
Pos DF App – Goals –
DOB 8 February 1982
 Captain of the Young Socceroos who narrowly lost to Brazil in 1999, Byrnes has experience beyond his years.

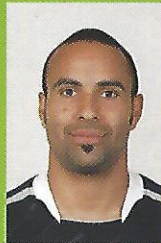


Daniel Allsopp
Pos FW App 1 Goals 0
DOB 10 August 1978
 Daniel has a wealth of overseas experience and was near ever-present up front for Victory last season.

5



Geoffrey Claey's
Pos DF App – Goals –
DOB 5 October 1974
 Classy Belgian defender who enjoyed a stint at Feyenoord in Holland. The rock at the back for Victory.

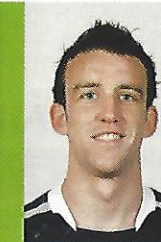


Archie Thompson
Pos FW App 1 Goals 0
DOB 23 October 1978
 The A-League's flashiest scorer, Archie is a favourite – and not just amongst Victory fans!

6 11



Vince Lia
Pos MF App – Goals –
DOB 18 March 1985
 A product of South Melbourne, Vince is a pacy midfielder who likes to get up and support the strikers.

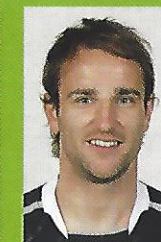


Simon Storey
Pos DF App 1 Goals 0
DOB 5 June 1982
 Former U-21 Player of the Year in the VPL can play at the back and in midfield. Holds a degree in physiotherapy.

7 12

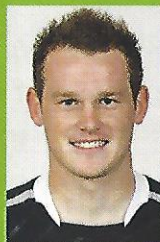


Rodrigo Vargas
Pos DF App 1 Goals 0
DOB 20 October 1978
 Chilean-born, technically gifted former Melbourne Knight, Vargas signed for the Victory in May.

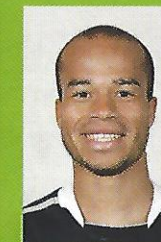


Grant Brebner
Pos MF App 1 Goals 0
DOB 6 December 1977
 Signed from SPL side Dundee United to add strength and substance to the midfield. Ex-Man United youth player.

8 13

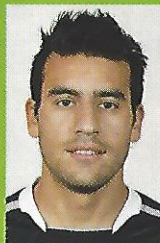


Kristian Sarkies
Pos MF App – Goals –
DOB 25 October 1986
 Sarkies is one of the league's hottest prospects and will be one of the keys to Melbourne's success.



Alessandro
Pos DF App 1 Goals 0
DOB 10 August 1983
 Signed from Brazilian side Internacional RS, Alessandro likes to attack down the wings as much as possible.

9 14



Adrian Caceres
Pos MF App 1 Goals 0
DOB 10 January 1982
 The Argentinian-born midfielder will be looking to build on last year's solid campaign with Perth Glory.



Claudio'nho
Pos FW App 1 Goals 1
DOB 7 May 1982
 The Brazilian striker has played over 100 games in his homeland. Has a powerful left foot and will be hard to handle.

10 15



Adrian Leijer
Pos DF App 1 Goals 0
DOB 25 March 1986
 This exciting youngster is so highly rated he trained with the Socceroos in Germany pre-World Cup.



Eugene Galekovic
Pos GK App – CS –
DOB 12 June 1981
 One of the country's most talented keepers, Eugene rotates the starting job with Michael Theoklitos.



teams

MELBOURNE VICTORY

Homeground
Olympic Park,
Melbourne

Coach
Ernie Merrick



Captain
Kevin Muscat



**TEAM
SCORE**

Half-time

Full-time

No.	Name	Position	✓	Goals
1.	Michael Theoklitos	Goalkeeper		
2.	Kevin Muscat	Defender		
3.	Daniel Piorkowski	Defender		
4.	Mark Byrnes	Defender		
5.	Geoffrey Claeys	Defender		
6.	Steve Pantelidis	Defender		
7.	Michael Ferrante	Midfielder		
8.	Fred	Striker		
9.	Daniel Allsopp	Striker		
10.	Archie Thomson	Striker		
11.	Vince Lia	Midfielder		
12.	Rodrigo Vargas	Defender		
13.	Kristian Sarkies	Midfielder		
14.	Adrian Caceres	Striker		
15.	Adrian Leijer	Defender		
16.	Simon Storey	Defender		
17.	Grant Brebner	Midfielder		
18.	Alessandro	Defender		
19.	Claudio	Striker		
20.	Eugene Galekovic	Goalkeeper		

teams

SYDNEY FC



Homeground
Aussie
Stadium,
Sydney

Coach
Terry Butcher



Captain
Dwight Yorke



**TEAM
SCORE**

Half-time

Full-time

No.	Name	Position	✓	Goals
1.	Clint Bolton	Goalkeeper		
2.	Iain Fyfe	Defender		
3.	Alvin Ceccoli	Defender		
4.	Mark Rudan	Defender		
6.	Ufuk Talay	Midfielder		
7.	Robbie Middleby	Midfielder		
8.	Ruben Zadkovich	Midfielder		
9.	David Zdrilic	Striker		
10.	Steve Corica	Midfielder		
11.	Sasho Petrovski	Striker		
12.	David Carney	Midfielder		
13.	Jeremy Brockie	Striker		
14.	Alex Brosque	Midfielder		
15.	Terry McFlynn	Midfielder		
16.	Mark Milligan	Defender		
17.	Jacob Timpano	Defender		
18.	Wade Oostendorp	Defender		
19.	Dwight Yorke	Midfielder		
20.	Justin Pasfield	Goalkeeper		
21.	Nikolai Topor-Stanley	Defender		

ROUND 2 TOKEN

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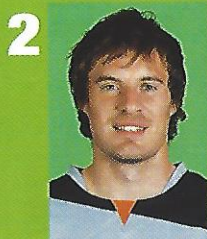
COLLECT SIX TOKENS THIS SEASON AND
BE IN THE RUNNING. WE WANT TO FIND
THE BIGGEST HAL FAN. DETAILS IN A
FUTURE ISSUE OF THE FULL 90!



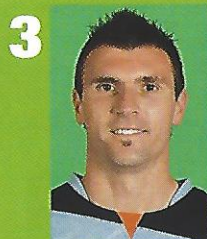
MELBOURNE VICTORY VS
SYDNEY FC



1 Clint Bolton
Pos GK **App** 1 **CS** 1
DOB 22 August 1975
 A Socceroo, Clint is one of the best 'keepers in the A-League and has also competed in the NSL.



2 Iain Fyfe
Pos DF **App** 1 **Goals** 1
DOB 3 April 1982
 Called into the Socceroo squad earlier this year, Fyfe is a key defender who has not yet seen his career peak.



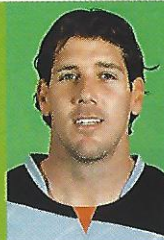
3 Alvin Ceccoli
Pos DF **App** 1 **Goals** 0
DOB 5 August 1974
 One of the league's most experienced defenders, Ceccoli is a legend of the NSL and has an eye for goal.



4 Mark Rudan
Pos DF **App** 1 **Goals** 0
DOB 27 August 1975
 Rudan is a tall and imposing defender who is strong in the air and a solid man marker. A real leader for Sydney FC.



6 Ufuk Talay
Pos MF **App** 1 **Goals** 0
DOB 26 March 1976
 Ufuk won an NSL title before the age of 18 with plenty of experience playing in the tough leagues of Turkey.



7 Robert Middleby
Pos MF **App** 1 **Goals** 0
DOB 9 August 1975
 Fast, direct-running midfielder who is a versatile player for Terry Butcher. Will be looking for a big season.



8 Ruben Zadkovich
Pos MF **App** – **Goals** –
DOB 23 May 1986
 Joined the team mid-season and impressed enough to win a long-term contract. Added spark to the midfield.



9 David Zdrilic
Pos FW **App** 1 **Goals** 0
DOB 13 April 1974
 Zdrilic is a hard-working forward who has plenty of international experience. Big and strong, he plays hard.



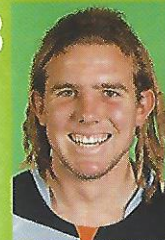
10 Steve Corica
Pos MF **App** 1 **Goals** 0
DOB 24 March 1973
 Corica spent years in England and Japan to fine tune his game. A versatile and dangerous midfielder.



11 Sasho Petrovski
Pos FW **App** 1 **Goals** 0
DOB 5 March 1975
 One of Sydney's most reliable scorers, he should do even better now with more options from new teammates.



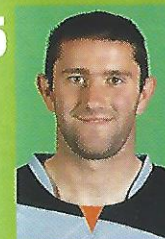
12 David Carney
Pos MF **App** 1 **Goals** 0
DOB 30 November 1983
 An ex-Everton junior, Carney was a true revelation last season. A tricky player, who opponents will mark closely.



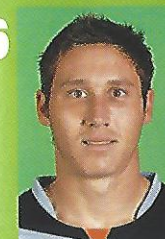
13 Jeremy Brockie
Pos FW **App** – **Goals** –
DOB 7 October 1987
 The dreadlocked star was a shining light for the NZ Knights but must now aim for a Sydney FC starting spot.



14 Alex Brosque
Pos FW **App** 1 **Goals** 0
DOB 12 Oct 1983
 The Roar will miss Brosque. His scoring and play was one of the flashiest, making him a crowd favourite.



15 Terry McFlynn
Pos MF **App** – **Goals** –
DOB 27 March 1981
 One of Sydney's most important players, appearing in 21 games last season. Combative ball winner.



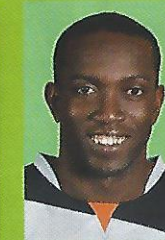
16 Mark Milligan
Pos DF **App** 1 **Goals** 0
DOB 4 August 1985
 Milligan's experience in the World Cup squad will make him a better player in season two. A smart defender.



17 Jacob Timpano
Pos DF **App** – **Goals** –
DOB 3 January 1986
 Tall, composed defender was a sensation, staying in the side all season after being given a start in Round 5.



18 Wade Oostendorp
Pos DF **App** – **Goals** –
DOB 20 April 1988
 One for the future. The 18 year-old didn't get a game last season but will undoubtedly learn from Terry Butcher.



19 Dwight Yorke
Pos MF **App** 1 **Goals** 0
DOB 3 March 1971
 When Sydney's star player fires, so does the rest of his side. Dwight has been revitalised in Sydney colours.



20 Justin Pasfield
Pos GK **App** – **CS** –
DOB 30 May 1985
 Terry Butcher is a known fan of his #2 'keeper. If he gets a chance, Pasfield will make the most of it.



21 Nikolai Topor-Stanley
Pos DF **App** 1 **Goals** 0
DOB 11 March 1985
 Nikolai has represented Australia at the 2005 FIFA World Youth Championships.



Keep the support alive.

Only a little bit over? You bloody idiot. **TAC** 

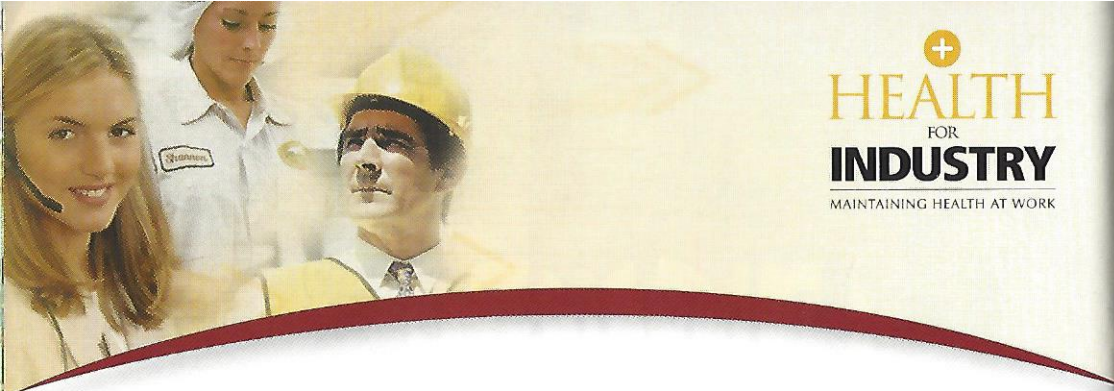


feature

COME BACK KING

PAUL OKON THE NEW JETS SKIPPER, IS UP FOR THE HYUNDAI A-LEAGUE CHALLENGE AFTER AN AMAZING 15-YEAR 'ADVENTURE' IN LEAGUES LIKE SERIE A AND THE PREMIERSHIP / **AIDAN ORMOND**

Those in the know rave about the majesty of Australia's Paul Okon. Robbie Slater reckons he is "without doubt one of the best ever players we've produced in the modern era." And Robbie should know – not only did he partner him in the Socceroo midfield in the mid-90s, but he saw how big



Our services at a glance

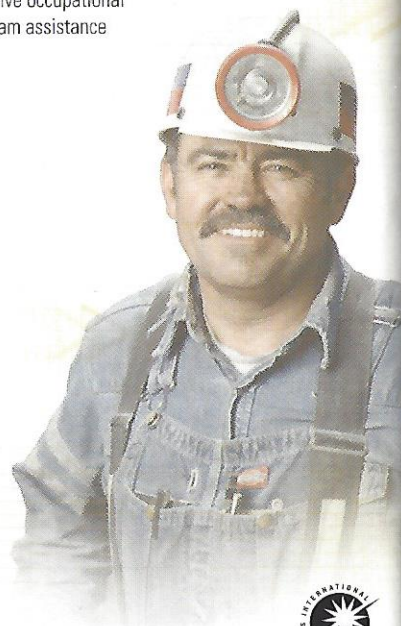
- > Injury treatment services
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feature

Okon's final
Socceroos game was
in September 2003

clubs were falling over themselves to sign the ball-playing libero.

And experience is what Okon has. After twice earning the title of NSL Young Player of the Year, he went on to play for the greatest Olyroo team in our history – the Barcelona Olympics side.

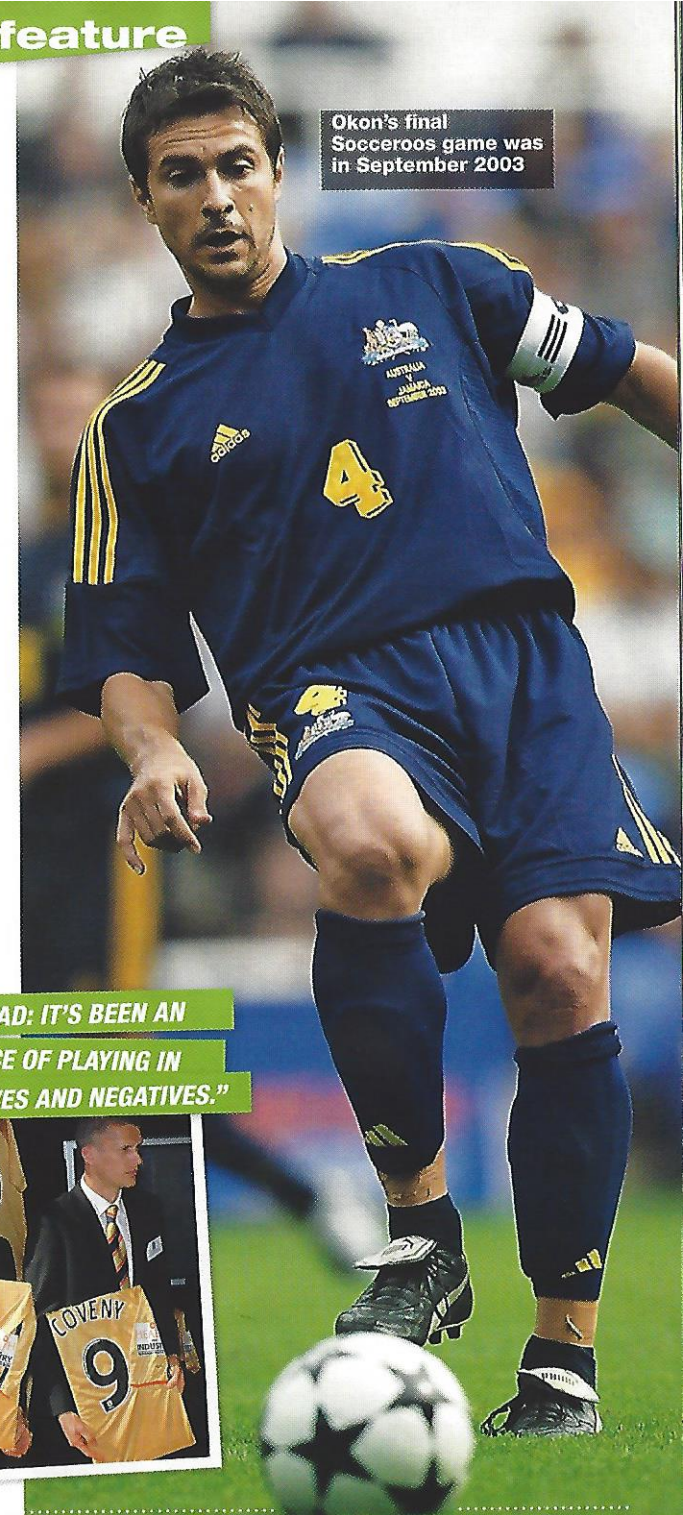
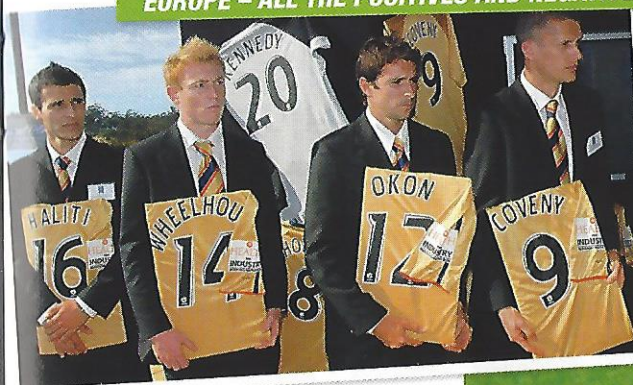
Okon was soon in demand in Europe and left his Aussie club Marconi in 1992 for a 15-year European odyssey with, amongst others, Club Brugge (where he was a Belgian Player of the Year), Lazio, Fiorentina, Middlesbrough and Leeds United.

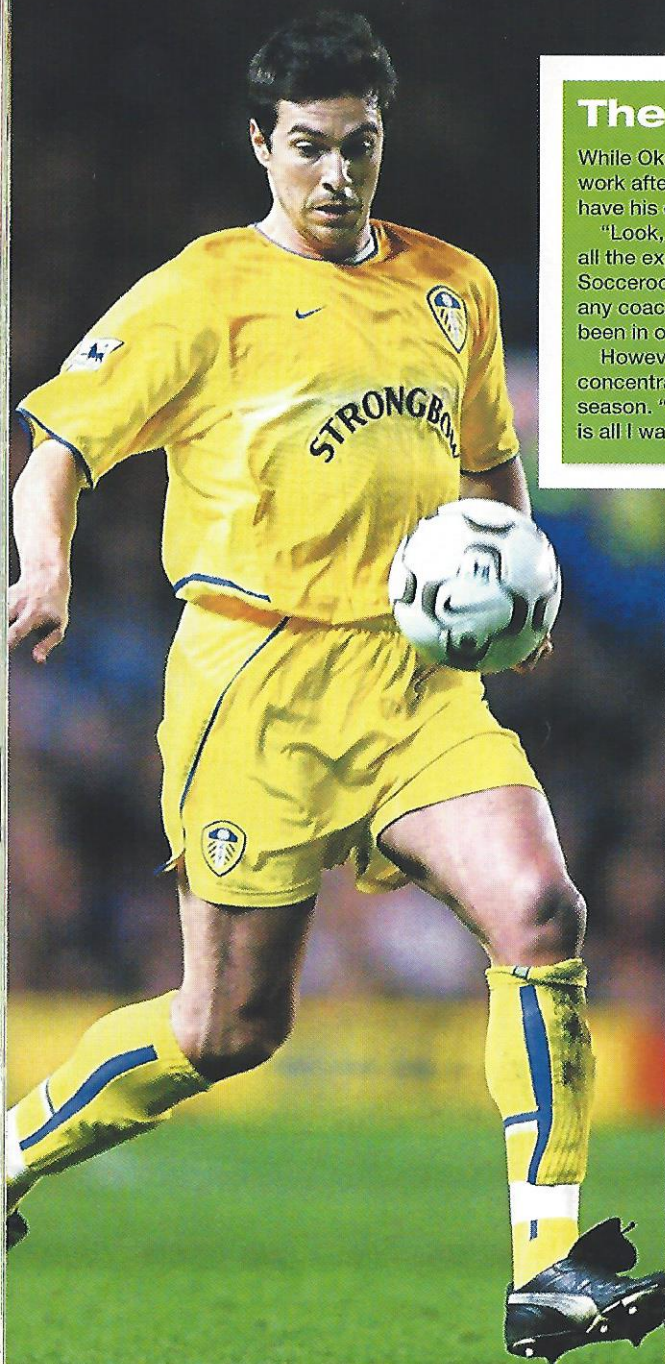
But, at 34, some have questioned Okon's fitness and motivation. However, an excellent pre-season with the Newcastle Jets and the excitement of finally being back home has given him the platform for a big season.

"I still feel competitive," Okon says adamantly. "Every game means something and I still set myself high standards. It was a goal to come back and I've achieved that goal. And there's no place like home.

"You can't buy what I've had: it's been an adventure. The experience of playing in Europe – all the positives and negatives. It taught me that hard

**"YOU CAN'T BUY WHAT I'VE HAD: IT'S BEEN AN
ADVENTURE. THE EXPERIENCE OF PLAYING IN
EUROPE – ALL THE POSITIVES AND NEGATIVES."**





The future

While Okon admits he probably won't need to work after he finishes playing football, he does have his eye on coaching.

"Look, it would be a waste not to pass on all the experience I have," says the former Socceroo skipper cautiously. "But I don't have any coaching badges as yet because I've haven't been in one place too long."

However, right now Okon is simply concentrating on his first-ever Hyundai A-League season. "While I'm still playing, being a footballer is all I want to concentrate on," he says.

work, ambition and focus are important. You've got to stick it out through the tough times."

Tough times

Paul Okon knows all about hard times. It's amazing that he is even playing football. In the mid 90s, he revealed to fellow Socceroos that his career could be over because of a persistent knee injury that was never treated properly by medical staff in Europe.

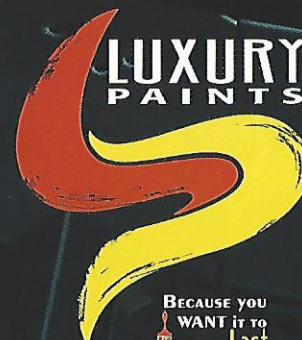
"When looking back on his career I feel two things," says Slater. "Frustration but also great credit. Look, I saw him when he was at Club Brugge and he was just at his absolute peak. Everyone, not only in Belgium but in Europe, was talking about this guy. That's why he ended up at Lazio in Serie A.

"But injury really stuffed him up," adds Slater. "That's where the frustration is; he had too much forced time out of the game. I remember he came with us to Tehran and back to Melbourne for the World Cup qualifier in 1997 against Iran.

"Arnie [Graham Arnold] and I were in the gym and I remember Paul saying his career was all over. Basically he said he was going to finish with football.

"But credit that he was able to come back from the depths of such despair to captain his nation. It was incredible." ■

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feature

STAN LAZARIDIS
IS AUSTRALIAN
FOOTBALLING
ROYALTY.
NOW HE'S BACK TO
HELP BUILD THE
A-LEAGUE EMPIRE!
/ **RICHIE YOUNG**

BACK ON THE HOME FRONT

Stan Lazaridis needs no introduction to Aussie football fans. The man is a legend. He's played his heart out for our country, was one of Australia's best known players to make their mark in Europe and, as legend has it, is one of the nicest guys you'd ever hope to meet. No wonder the flying winger has been a fan favourite at every club he has joined.



Stan's left peg is still one of the best in Australia

BBQ King

Back in 2003, Stan Lazaridis had a (now infamous) BBQ at his home in Birmingham. With an Australian football supporters group in town, Stan met up with the group at their hotel before generously inviting them ALL back to his house.

Led by football identity Andrew Paschalidis, the supporters were watching games in Europe, including a Socceroos vs Ireland match. Amazingly and in true Aussie style, Stan and his lovely wife Mary played host – on his birthday – providing all the beer and food! What other Premier League star would do that? None!

winter, there are three clouds in the sky, the sun is beaming and I'm looking at blue ocean!

"I spent enough time over there [England] and I missed home. I've got a family now and the decision is not just mine alone. If I was on my own I would probably have stayed another year but the decision is not just about Stan Lazaridis anymore. It's about everyone

around me. The money side of it didn't come into consideration. I gave up a lot of money to come back here and play for Perth Glory," he proudly declares.

The big picture

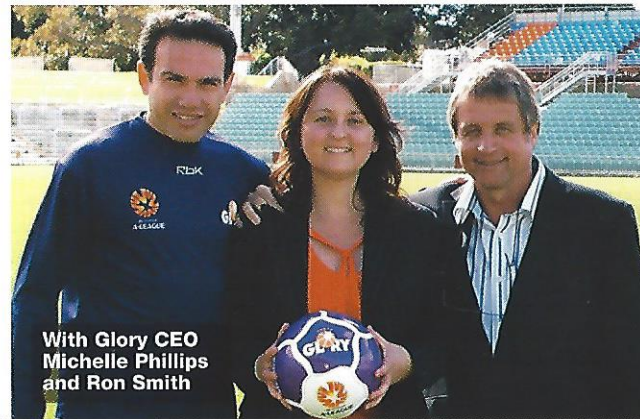
While playing well for Perth is his priority, making sure the Hyundai A-League fulfills its potential is also on Stan's agenda. True to his character, Stan followed the A-League last season from Birmingham and wanted to play his part. "I'd been following it right from when it started and the old NSL as well. It was a good year. The addition of Dwight Yorke coming to play for Sydney was a good move for them that paid off. Credit has to be given to the FFA. Frank Lowy, John O'Neill, John Boulton – all these men have a passion for the game and have said, 'I'm going to put

my neck on the line and revamp the league,' and they did.

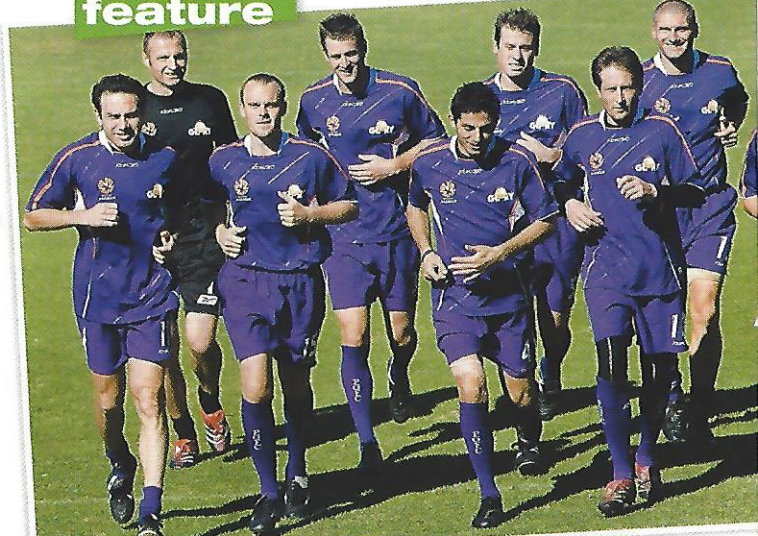
"They've done a fantastic job and not just that, with the Socceroos too. The whole A-League has been a huge success and it can only get better now that we've been to the World Cup. And with the Asian league we can look forward now. Sponsors are coming on board... Everyone I'm speaking to is really excited," he says.

While he has a glittering national career behind him, Stan, and hordes of Socceroo fans were disappointed that he did not see any game time in Germany, and that he had to withdraw from the side that recently faced Kuwait due to illness. His contribution to the national cause will never be forgotten though, and he has hinted that the upcoming games against Paraguay and Bahrain may be his last in the green and gold. He also believes that it won't be too long before more Socceroos join him in the Hyundai A-League.

"I'd say that will probably happen in the next two years.



With Glory CEO Michelle Phillips and Ron Smith



"HIS CONTRIBUTION TO THE NATIONAL CAUSE WILL NEVER BE FORGOTTEN... THE UPCOMING GAMES

MAY BE HIS LAST IN THE GREEN AND GOLD."

A lot of the players want to come back for the lifestyle and they're in similar situations to me where they have achieved everything that they'd set out to do. The A-League is gaining momentum, it's a lot more interesting, there's a fever going around with the public and players can earn themselves good livings so it's very attractive.

"What you've got to remember is that a lot of players overseas aren't playing for big clubs or in big leagues. They're playing

in lower clubs and not earning huge money. It's probably in their interests if they come home. It'd be better for them, their families – the whole lot!"

His old defensive partner, Tony Vidmar is another player who has recently returned from Europe and Stan says that the Mariners will benefit from Vidmar's experience: "I keep missing his calls! We've missed each other's calls actually! But it's a great move for Tony and it's a great move for the Mariners. He's a big signing for them and he'll add a lot of experience."

The Blues

With the Hyundai A-League season now in full swing, Stan's still spends lots of time on the net. This time though, he's keeping up to date with what's happening in England! The English Premier League and Birmingham City football club's websites are at the top of his 'favourites' list as he follows the Blues' season as an outsider for the first time since joining them in 1999.

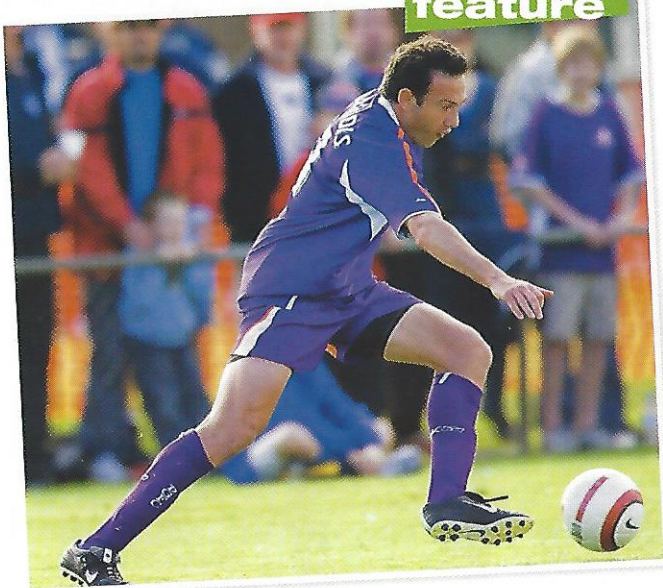
Glorious lifestyle

With his long-awaited return to his home town, the expectations of the Perth Glory have suddenly increased. And Stan, who has played for West Ham and Birmingham City, is relishing the opportunity. Being back on Aussie shores has revitalized the mazy runner; and while he admits his international career is drawing to a close, Stan is keen to help lead the West Australian side back into finals contention.

Stan has openly stated that

personal desires brought him back home to Perth. It is his motivation to "give back to the game" and the benefits of the Aussie lifestyle that's allowing Hyundai A-League fans to appreciate Stan's abilities again. So now that he's back with his feet on the ground, is it as good as he'd hoped? After all, Stan hasn't lived here for 15 years.

"I'll explain it to you now, right..." he tells *The Full 90*. "I'm driving along West Coast highway, we're in the middle of



"I'm following it on the 'net and also through the bits I am getting on Fox Sports so of course I miss it but you can't play forever. There's a ceiling, time is ticking away and you have to be realistic."

The season ahead

"I wanted to come back to the A-League while I was still in good physical shape. I wanted to help the boys around me, help the club and also the supporters coming to watch. I want to put something back in at a good level," says Stan.

Make no mistake: Stan is not back home for a holiday. He's looking forward to getting re-acquainted on-field with his new teammates. "I already knew some of the boys. There's Bobby Despotovski who I know very well; Jamie Harnwell, Jason Petkovic. I knew all these boys before I left.

"And there are a lot of young boys coming through... David Micevski: he's one that people will have to watch out for. He could soon be knocking on the Socceroos' door. We've also just

signed a few young boys to see how they're going to develop. If anyone can take young players to the top it's Ron Smith. I'm very impressed with that side of things. Leo Bertos is also a very exciting player for us so there's a couple there who should be standouts. We'll have to work hard and we have some big players at the back who give us

"THERE'S BOBBY DESPOTOVSKI WHO I KNOW VERY WELL PERSONALLY; JAMIE HARNWELL, JASON PETKOVIC. I KNEW ALL THESE BOYS BEFORE I LEFT."

size and presence. All in all I'm very excited with the team we've got. We'll be competitive. I won't say we'll win the league... we'll be going for it but our aim is to make the top four. After that, we'll see what happens."

On the form of rival sides, Stan believes the difference between all the teams is minimal. "Sydney are obviously the champs and they were very impressive against us. I think Sydney and Adelaide will be two teams that are going to be the

early pacesetters. I think it'll be someone like Queensland who will be the dark horse so those three will be the teams I'd be earmarking out. But then there's Melbourne Victory. I watched them a few times and on their day they are unbelievable! Kevin Muscat is there, who I know, and if anyone can get the boys going he's certainly the one to do it. Archie Thompson, Sarkies... they've got a good nucleus of players as well.

"This year it will depend largely on how teams do at home. If you've got a good home record, then that could almost guarantee you a top four spot. Then whatever points you pick up at away games will be a bonus," he says.

Long distance

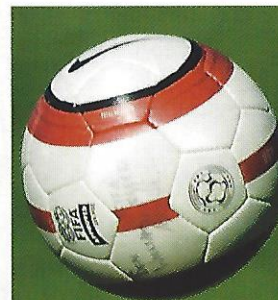
Stan knows how hard traveling to away games can be. In the pre-season, Stan fell ill after their trip to Wollongong, NSW which

led to his withdrawal from the Socceroos team to meet Kuwait. In round seven's match against the New Zealand Knights, it will be even more challenging – the Perth / NZ match-up is the longest distance between two club sides in world football.

"I encountered [distances like that] with the Wollongong experience to play Sydney and I ended up getting ill and the boys made a few jokes about it: 'we took you on one trip to the 'Gong and we lost you!' That game will

The wonder goal

Stan Lazaridis isn't known for bags of goals, but he is known to surprise oppositions with spectacular ones from time to time. In 2004, he did just that as Birmingham tore apart Everton 3-0. Lazza raced half the length of the field to slam home the second goal. Steve Bruce, his manager at the time, said: "It was a fantastic goal and Stan's contribution since we came into this division has been immense. He's done great and I am very pleased for the lad. He is a terrific professional and he has been very, very good over the past 18 months."



"THIS SEASON WE ARE GOING TO BE ENTERTAINING, WE WILL BE COMPETITIVE AND IT'S GOING TO BE WORTHWHILE FOR ALL THE SUPPORTERS"

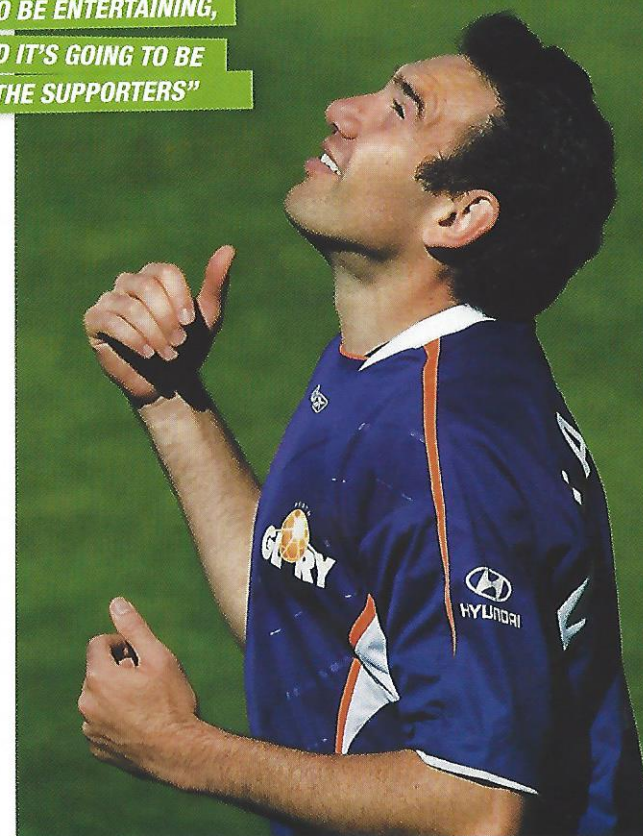
be interesting. I'm sure they'll do enough measures for that game and leave us enough time to rest and recuperate right and give it a good go," he says.

The Message

With the upheaval of the first Hyundai A-League season now history, things are looking much brighter at Perth Glory. Alongside Stan, are two other key arrivals in the form of new manager, former Socceroo technical manager Ron Smith and CEO Michelle Phillips. With optimism high, Stan wants to send a message to the fans.

"I know the fans were disappointed last season because for Perth, not to make the top four is a big disappointment. This season we are going to be entertaining, we will be competitive and it's going to be worthwhile for all the supporters to watch us."

Welcome home Stan. ■



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ONE'S STATISTICS TELL
A COMPELLING STORY
/ **JAMES MULLAN &
RICHIE YOUNG**



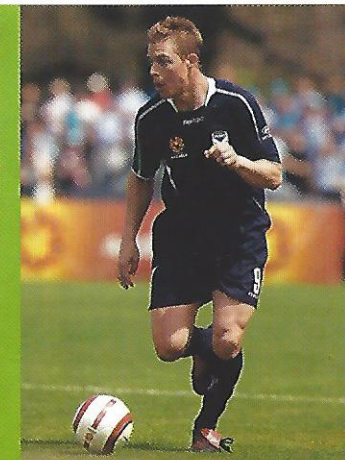
Shooting blanks

Queensland Roar finished third from the bottom of last season's Hyundai A-League table. Seemingly, that should be the end of the story – but it's not. No matter what way you looked at the stats – the Roar played well. That's a credit to the team, but also to the closeness of all the A-League sides.

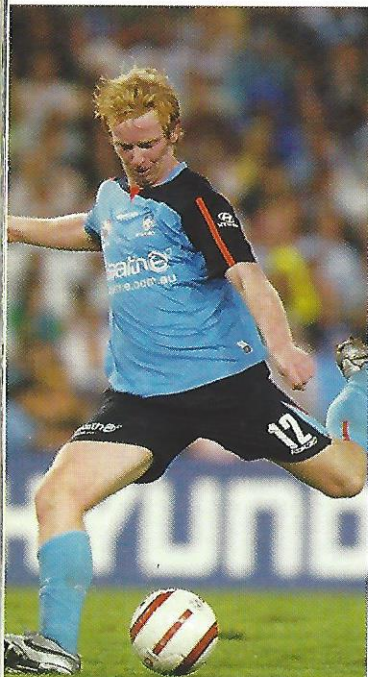
Queensland Roar were a mere three points from reaching the fourth playoff place and while their season goal tally of 27 was relatively modest, they easily had the most shots on target

of the entire A-League. Their star player from last season's campaign was Alex Brosque – he hit an impressive 203 shots on target. Rival fans may argue that that was just Roar's problem though – plenty of roar, but not enough bite.

Somewhat surprisingly, Queensland also conceded the least goals. So while goalkeepers Tom Willis and Scott Higgins might have had good seasons, it seems that fine performances from opposition goalies were eventually just as big a thorn in their side. No easy goals came



their way either. Queensland was also the only team not awarded a single penalty in the course of the season. Melbourne Victory, however, were awarded six. Were Queensland hard done by? Possibly, but the team also conceded the greatest number of fouls.



Goal happy

Sydney FC, who are in the A-League's history books as being the inaugural winners, were joint top scorers with the Central Coast Mariners with 35 goals each. This is despite the fact that they had the least shots from inside the penalty box of any side. With 419, the Sydneysiders also had the most crosses – thanks to winger David Carney's contribution of 101. Of course, those penalty area statistics suggest that very few of them were actually completed.

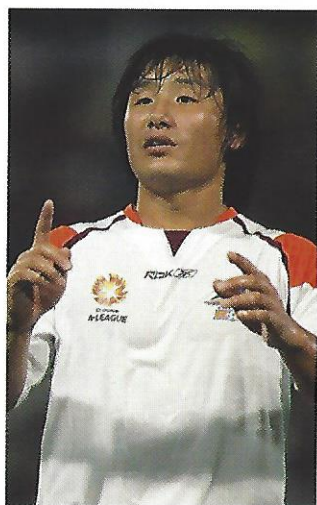
Passing time

Sydney's success seems to have come by way of multiple passing combinations. Pierre Littbarski's side relied most on passing the ball (6,198 completed passes), while Adelaide passed the least (3,860 completed passes).

Hyuk-Su Seo of the Queensland Roar was the top passer – completing the most passes of any player with 781. Seo was also the man behind

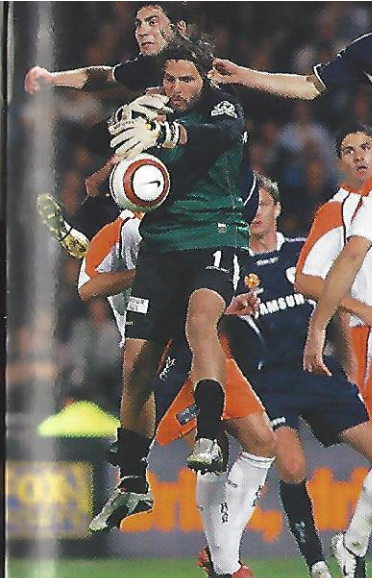
the most effective tackles with 86 confirming his reputation as a true workhorse.

In all, and much to the chagrin of rival fans, the statistics appear to bear out Sydney FC as worthy champions, despite not topping the league itself before the playoffs. Their short passing game and proliferation of goals from outside the box does suggest claims that they were the most skilful outfit.



On the flipside

Adelaide, who topped the league, certainly had a different style from Sydney. Yet, while they appeared successful in the league itself, it was their undoing in the playoffs. Their organised defence, which was so successful at playing the offside trap (133 times compared to Sydney's 76), only invited pot-shots, crosses and passes from deeper positions. These plays however, appear to have been some of Sydney's main strengths. Their passing game would be the one, if any, which would break down the Adelaide defence. However, Adelaide's discipline in attack meant they would also spur few chances given the opportunity.

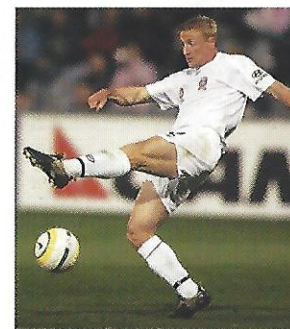


Foul trouble

With 346 fouls recorded – the Melbourne Victory were victims of the most fouls, but it was New Zealand's Zenon Caravella who was the player fouled most often.

Refreshed

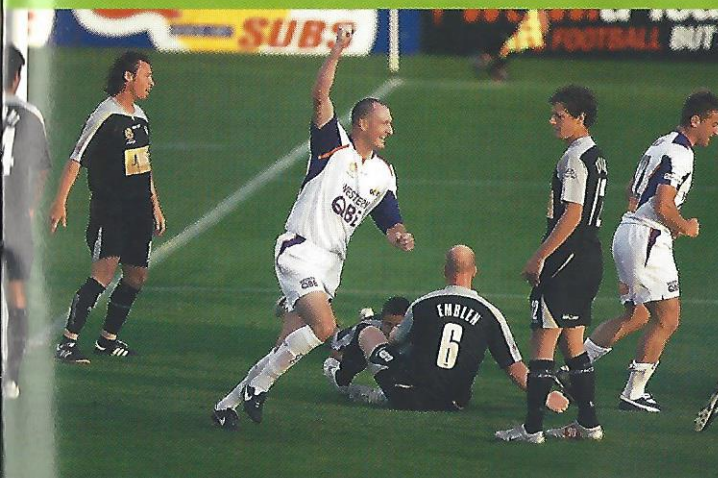
With the high anticipation of a long season ahead though, all slates have been wiped clean – and the number crunching begins all over again. *The Full 90* wishes all eight HAL clubs successful seasons. ■



The Knights

On the other end of the scale, the New Zealand Knights' campaign was reflected in their statistics. Their strikers were caught offside most – 83 times

and made only 117 shots that were on target all season. Overall, their defenders certainly worked hard though – having to make 545 tackles throughout the season.



Did you Know?

■ Melbourne Victory shot most often from inside the penalty box (80 shots) with Daniel Allsopp chalking up the most with 27 last season

■ With 462, Perth Glory tackled the least

■ Newcastle Jets was the team awarded the least fouls (268)

■ New Zealand Knights conceded the most penalties (6)

■ Adelaide and Newcastle conceded one penalty each

■ There were 42 games that were won by a one goal margin

■ Four games were won by a four-goal margin

■ Adelaide lost four times



Match statistics for were collected by Sportsdata - Hyundai A-League's official statistician.

17

IMPORT
GRANT BREBNER

SCOT FREE

SCOTTISH IMPORT AND *NEIGHBOURS* FAN **GRANT BREBNER**
IS THE MAN IN THE MIDDLE FOR VICTORY / **AIDAN ORMOND**

Victory's Scottish import Grant Brebner is a massive *Neighbours* fan, according to Melbourne Victory skipper Kevin Muscat. "Yeah, I went on the *Neighbours* tour," Brebner admits when quizzed about it after training at Melbourne Grammar sports fields. "And I met some of the celebs from the show, like Toadie. *Neighbours* is a huge programme in the UK!"

Brebner is accustomed to celebrities though. He did his football apprenticeship at Manchester United in the mid-90s where he mixed with footy royalty like David Beckham, Roy Keane and, of course, manager Sir Alex Ferguson.

Mates with Phil Neville

His best mate at Man Utd was, and still is, the versatile Phil Neville (who has since moved to Everton). Brebner says being at Manchester United taught him so many things, but in particular, how to conduct yourself on and off the park.

"A lot of people say such and such a player helped the younger players when they don't really. Ryan Giggs actually did help us younger players. He was an absolute pro. The whole experience was amazing."

Brebner played for United between '94 and '98 but couldn't crack their star midfield line-up. So a move to second-tier English clubs (he played for Reading where he scored 11 goals in 46 games), then back to Scotland to play for the likes of Dundee United and Hibs, gave him a chance of regular first team matches.

At Hibs, he got to play UEFA Cup football and play with one of the great French imports Franck Sauzee.

Now Brebner himself is an import, he feels it's an "exciting" move for him despite being so far from home. And he says Victory train harder than he is accustomed to.

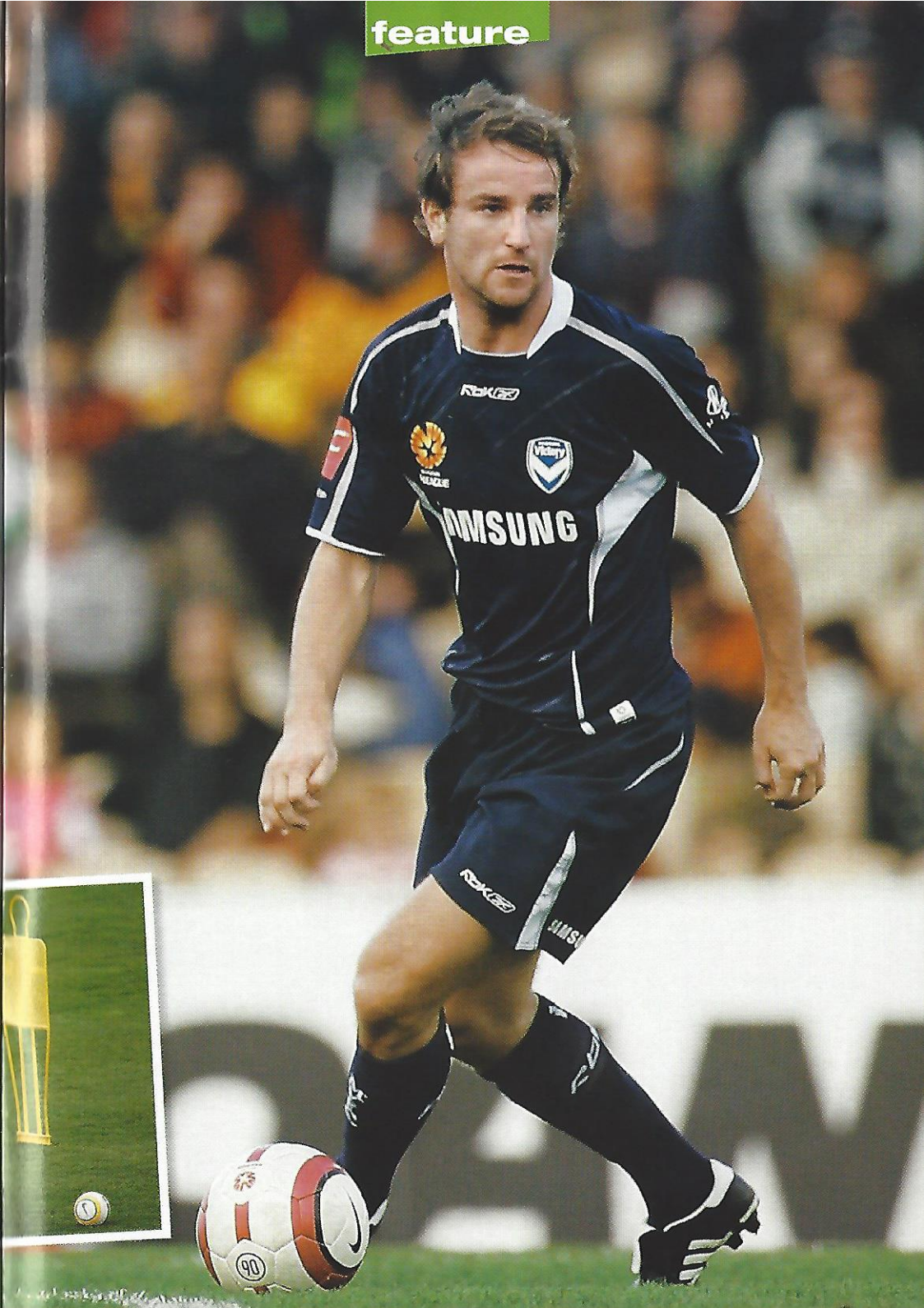
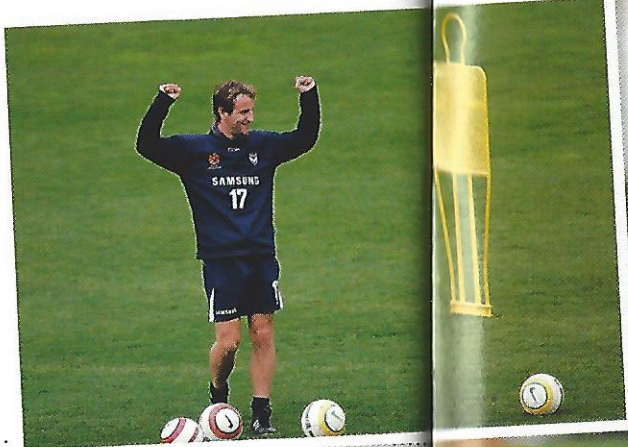
"Victory do a lot of double sessions while back home, we'd probably do one session only. It's been full-on. So there hasn't been much time for me to look around Melbourne as I've been training so much," says Brebner, who has moved to the beachside suburb of Elwood and is looking forward to enjoying a Melbourne summer.

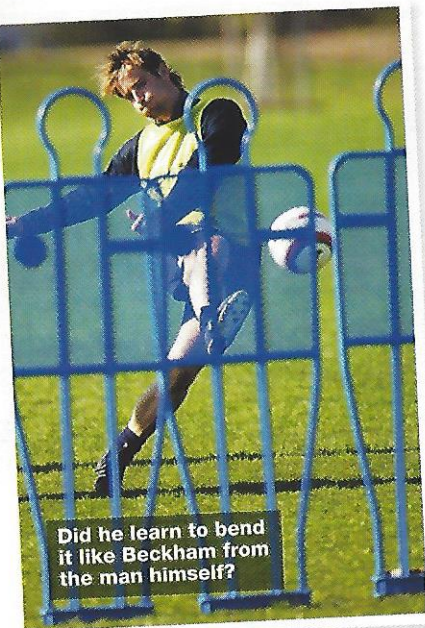
Eye Catcher

Brebner made an immediate impact with Victory, scoring the winning penalty in a shoot-out as a triallist to win a pre-season tournament in Qld.

"[AT MAN UNITED] RYAN GIGGS DID ACTUALLY HELP US YOUNG PLAYERS. HE WAS AN ABSOLUTE PRO. THE WHOLE EXPERIENCE WAS AMAZING."

Victory supremo Ernie Merrick has been impressed with Brebner's work-rate and attitude. He plans to play him in the centre of midfield with Muscat which will make an imposing duo. Brebner is likely to play more of an attacking role while the skipper will be more of a holding midfielder.





Sydney and Melbourne

Brebner is also enthused about playing against Sydney FC in round two at Telstra Dome. The Victory man played against Terry Butcher's Motherwell on many occasions back in the Scottish Premier League. He says they played an "attacking brand of football" under the ex-England centre back but then again sometimes they were "terrible".

"I came to Melbourne first to have a look around," says Brebner. "And I was really impressed with the facilities and city. And our new Brazilian imports have been terrific, too. They are young and enthusiastic. But the clincher was the banter between the boys. It's great."

Even if he does cop a ribbing over his love of *Neighbours*. ■

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Under NEW MANAGEMENT

PAUL NEVIN HAS WORKED IN THE PREMIERSHIP AND IS NOW LEADING A HUNGRY NEW BREED OF NZ KNIGHTS. CAN HE CHANGE THEIR FORTUNES THIS SEASON? / **AIDAN ORMOND**

He may be the youngest manager in the Hyundai A-League, but New Zealand Knights boss Paul Nevin has a coaching CV to envy. English Premiership club Fulham over the last eight years as the club's academy and reserves boss is impressive reading.

Fulham's first team boss Chris Coleman – widely regarded as one of the best young managers in the UK – is clearly a fan of the new Knights supremo. "I worked with Paul when I was a player. When I became manager, I brought him into my squad management team.

"He was a much respected member of the coaching staff," said Welsh international Coleman after Nevin's appointment to the Knights earlier this year.

Kiwi ties

Nevin, 36, is married to a New Zealander. So when the offer came to work with the Knights, the Englishman jumped at the chance. And, after arriving as an assistant to John Adshead, he took the side's reins when the popular Englishman parted ways with the club.

The new boss has been impressed with what he's seen of the Hyundai A-League. "What people don't realise is that it's a

good standard," he says with strong emphasis.

He is clearly enjoying the tricky task of turning the Knights into the Hyundai A-League Version 2 surprise packet. The Kiwis get a bit of a leg-up, too, enjoying a trio of home games on the spin (Jets, Adelaide and Victory) to kick off their campaign.

And they may just get those coveted points in front of their fans. "That's why we have to get off to a good start. It will drive more fans to us and hopefully that momentum will stay."

Goal driven

The Knights look strong in the middle with Scot Gemmill and Richard Johnson capable of fighting for the ball, but scoring goals will be vital to get the momentum really moving.

Nevin signed striker Dani Rodrigues in the pre-season for that very reason. The 26 year-old former Portugal U-21 striker – signed by Glenn Hoddle when Southampton was a Premiership club – is what Nevin calls a great all-rounder.

"There isn't one part of his game that's outstanding, Dani's just very good at every aspect of being a striker. And he has a phenomenal work rate," he says.

Other signings, Aussies Jonti

Richter and Adam Casey, should prove dangerous in the box, but it's the likes of exciting midfielder Malik Buari that has Nevin feeling good going into the season.

"Malik is going to get better and better," predicts Nevin of the 22 year-old Ghanian born star who turned out five times for Fulham between 1999 and 2005.

Surprise poll

A recent poll of Hyundai A-League captains had most believing the Knights will be dark horses for a finals spot. Even though he was happy to hear this, Nevin is still not getting carried away just yet.

"Each match is like an international," says Nevin when describing the Knights' "unique" geographic position in the Hyundai A-League. "You're flying to Australia every second week which is a challenge in itself. And it's always going to be high pressure when you are representing an entire nation.

"Six of the players from last season's squad are still mentally scarred by last year," he notes. "They say 'we don't want to let the league down, we don't want to let the country down'." "Well," he continues firmly, "we've got to change that attitude. We've got to win for ourselves."



"HE IS CLEARLY ENJOYING THE TRICKY TASK OF TURNING THE KNIGHTS INTO THE A-LEAGUE VERSION 2 SURPRISE PACKET."

NEXT WEEK

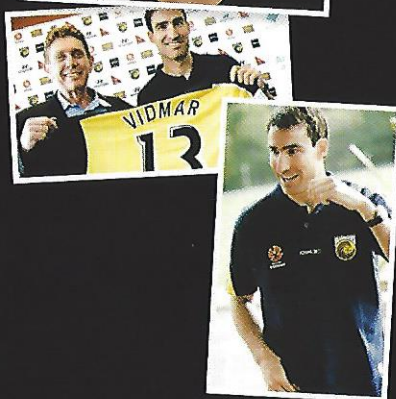
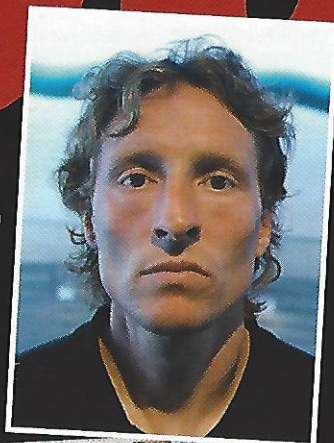
**NEW ZEALAND
KNIGHTS
MASSIVE INTERVIEW
WITH SCOT GEMMILL**

**THE TALENT SPOTTER
RON SMITH
TALKS GUUS, THE
SOCCEROOS AND
PERTH GLORY**

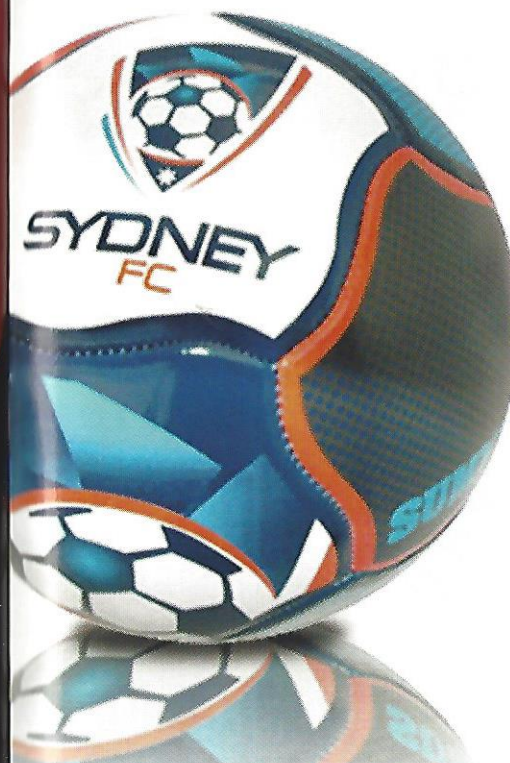
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goal!



78 minutes

Let's hear it for the Hyundai A-League's new imports! Melbourne's Brazilian stars shone last weekend; with Claudinho capping it all off with a great goal. Good luck and welcome, to every new international player this season.

Jamie McMaster CHECK OUT!

ON THE CENTRAL COAST, TRANSFER DEALS ARE DONE AT THE LOCAL SUPERMARKET... / **JACKSON GOTHE-SNAPE**

Jamie McMaster left Aussie shores for the bright lights of the English Premier League. Now, A-League glory is on the agenda.

How did you find your way back to the Central Coast?

I left Leeds in England not too happily and ended up going to Denmark for a few games, but didn't like it. I didn't even think there was a spot available at the Mariners. Allan Bourke [Central Coast Director of Coaching] actually met my mum at the shops and she told him that I was back. So Lawrie asked me up to training and as it happened Mrdja was still out with his injury so I got the place mid-way through last year.

What difference did the full pre-season make?

Massive. I've already dropped five kilos from last year. Andrew Clark's got me fit and going again.

What are your personal ambitions for the season?

I want to play every game, I want to be part of every game. I want to win things. I want to do as much as possible because it's been a long time since I've played regularly.

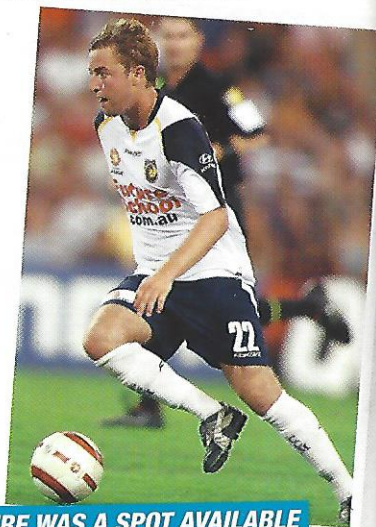
What's your favourite position?

I would love to play up front or in behind the front two but that

doesn't always happen. We've had that many injuries with the Mariners since the start of the year I've been playing here, there and everywhere.

Who are the best players you've played with?

I played with a lot of good players at Leeds. Guys like Stephen McPhail. Of course, Mark Viduka, for his personality. He's such a fun-loving guy. And Harry was there. Also, Jonathan Woodgate. He was another character that stands out because he was really good with all the young boys.



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Who was the hardest person to play against?

It was probably a reserve game against Danny Murphy.

What can you say about your future?

I don't really want to put a time limit on it. I've got a season with the Mariners. I've been to that many places in the past six or seven years, I just want to come home and settle down for a bit.

You played youth internationals for England. Where does your eligibility stand now?

What do you make of the Glory?

I had a British passport so was able to play for England but I've changed it now so I can play for Australia. I'll get my head down, get playing for the Mariners and then take it from there.

What do you make of the Glory?

We played them in the pre-season cup and they're a very hard working team. I think they've got a lot of changes happening at the moment, and they've brought in Stan Lazaridis who's a great player. ■



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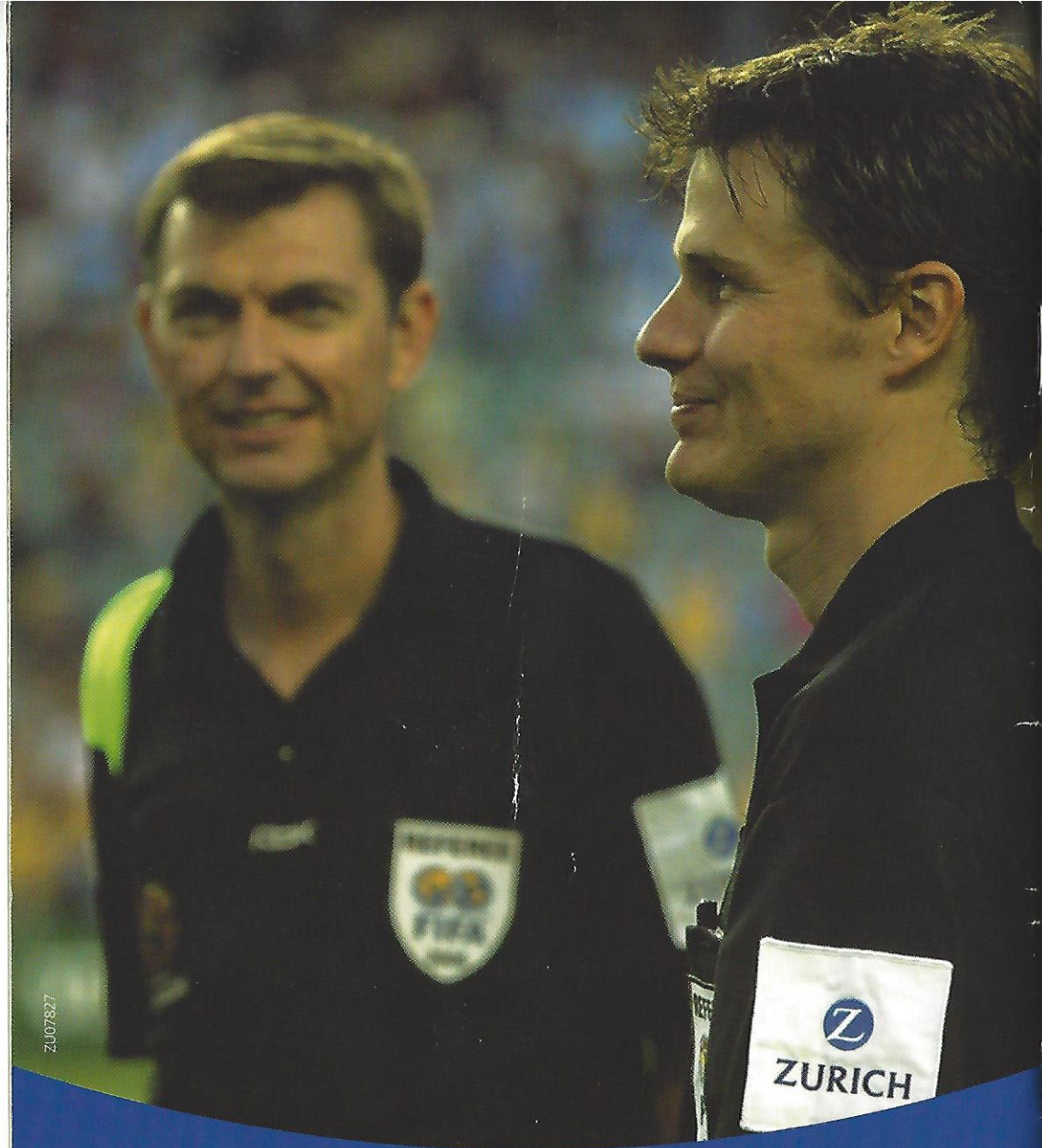
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